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ABSTRACT

With relatively high fertility and growing legal and illegal immigration, the United States' Hispanic population increased by 265% from an estimated 4 million in 1950 to 14.6 million (6.4% of the total population counted in the 1980 census). Hispanics consist of Mexican Americans (60% of the total), concentrated in the Southwest; Puerto Ricans living mainly in New York and New Jersey; Cubans headquartered in Florida; and the second largest, more scattered "Other Hispanic" group from 16 other Latin American countries and Spain, plus some Mexican Americans established many generations in the Southwest. Compared to 75% of the general population, 88% of Hispanics live in metropolitan areas. Except for Cubans, Hispanics are younger (median age 23) than the national average (median age 30 in 1980), and have higher fertility (2.5 versus 1.8 births per woman). Hispanic occupational status and educational attainment still lag far behind the average and unemployment is 40-50% higher; Hispanic families average 70% of the median income and 2.7 times the poverty rate of all white families. Young Hispanics, Cubans in particular, are beginning to catch up. The bulletin includes 5 figures, 15 tables, brief life stories of 4 Hispanics, photographs, and a map showing states where most Hispanics live. (Author/MH).

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# U.S. Hispanics: Changing the Face of America

By Cary Davis, Carl Haub and JoAnne Willette

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*Abstract*—With relatively high fertility and growing legal and illegal immigration, the U.S. Hispanic population increased by some 265 percent from an estimated 4 million in 1950 to 14.6 million and 6.4 percent of the total population counted in the 1980 census. By 2020 they could number some 47 million and displace blacks as the largest U.S. minority if immigration were to continue at the recent estimated level of one million a year (legal plus illegal, Hispanics plus all others). Self-identified as persons who trace their heritage to Spanish-speaking countries, Hispanics consist of Mexican Americans (60 percent of the total), still concentrated in the Southwest; Puerto Ricans living mainly in New York and New Jersey; Cubans headquartered in Florida; and the second largest, more scattered "Other Hispanic" group from some 16 other Latin American countries and Spain, plus some Mexican Americans established many generations in the U.S. Southwest. Fully 88 percent of Hispanics, compared to 75 percent of the general population, live in metropolitan areas. Except for Cubans, Hispanics are younger than the U.S. average (a median of 23 years versus the general median of 30 in 1980) and have higher fertility (an estimated 2.5 versus 1.8 births per woman), though their life expectancy may now equal that of all U.S. whites. They are also more likely to be divorced or separated and live in female-headed families. Hispanic occupational status and educational attainment still lag far behind the U.S. average, unemployment is 40-50 percent higher, and Hispanic families average 70 percent of the median income and 2.7 times the poverty rate of all U.S. white families. But younger Hispanics and Cubans in particular are beginning to catch up, as is likely also for future generations of U.S. Hispanics. However, with their common language and large numbers (including a large, if unknown, number of "undocumented" aliens), assimilation into the U.S. "melting pot" may take longer for Hispanics than it did for other immigrant ethnic groups before them.

Editor: Jean van der Tak

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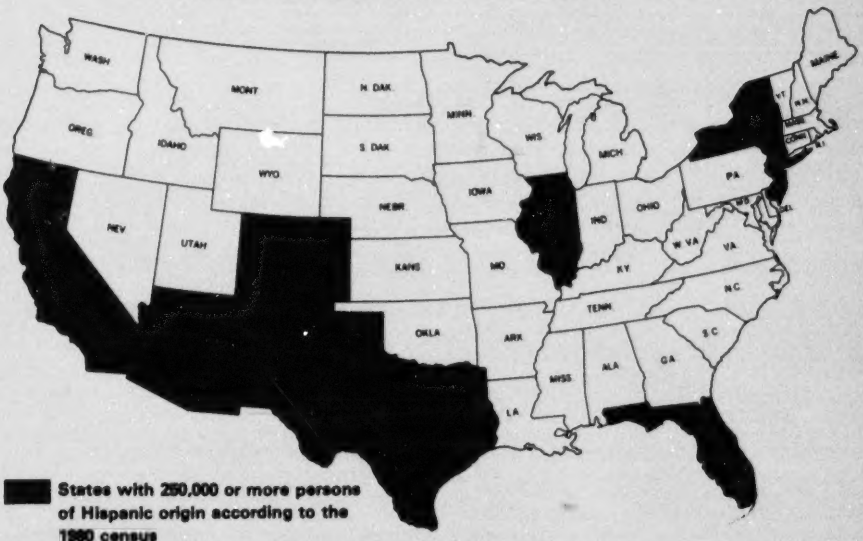
## WHERE MOST HISPANICS LIVE




**States with 250,000 or more persons of Hispanic origin according to the 1980 census**

*Some 85 percent of the 14.6 million Hispanics counted in the 1980 U.S. census lived in these nine states. Mexican Americans, the largest Hispanic group, are concentrated in the Southwest, particularly California and Texas. Most Puerto Ricans live in New York and New Jersey. Cubans are headquartered in Florida. The largest numbers of the fourth, more scattered "Other Hispanic" group are found in California and New York.*



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# *U.S. Hispanics: Changing the Face of America*

By **Cary Davis, Carl Haub**
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The 1980 census counted 14.6 million persons of Spanish origin in the United States, 6.4 percent of the then total population of 226.5 million. Hispanics are the second largest U.S. minority after blacks (11.7 percent in 1980) and the fastest growing. Fueled by the relatively high fertility of most Hispanic groups and increasing immigration, both legal and illegal, their numbers grew by about 265 percent from 1950 to 1980, compared to just under 50 percent for the total U.S. population. If immigration to the U.S. were to continue at the recent estimated total of about one million a year (legal plus illegal, Hispanics plus Asians and all others), Hispanics could number some 47 million and comprise 15 percent of the population by the year 2020, displacing blacks as the country's largest minority.

Thirty years ago, Spanish Americans consisted primarily of a few million Mexican Americans living in the Southwest, some of whom traced their ancestry back to the original Spanish-colonial and Indian inhabitants of that area. Today the umbrella term "Hispanic" covers a diverse population, still concentrated in a few states, but found throughout the nation: Mexican Americans, now beginning to move from their traditional base in the Southwest; Puerto Ricans, mainly concentrated in New York and New Jersey; Cubans headquartered in Florida; and recent arrivals from at least 16 other Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and Spain itself.

Like other immigrant groups before them, Hispanics are beginning to change the face of America, making their distinctive contributions to the neighborhoods in which they live. But with their growing numbers, they are also encountering the hostility historically accorded almost all newly arriving ethnic groups. Some predict that Hispanics will eventually assimilate into the American "melting pot" as the Irish, Italians, and Polish did before them. Others feel their very numbers and common language could delay assimilation and create a "Hispanic Quebec" within the United States. Hispanics also face a special problem in gaining acceptance—the presence among them of a large and growing number of illegal immigrants from Mexico and other Central and South American countries. And as America's

latest great wave of immigrants, they are learning that newcomers start out at the bottom. U.S. Hispanics as a group are much less educated, much poorer, occupy lower rungs on the occupational ladder, and are much more likely to be unemployed than the non-Hispanic population. But some Hispanics, particularly Cubans, are beginning to catch up and the evidence suggests that future generations of U.S. Hispanics will too.

This *Bulletin* looks at where U.S. Hispanics are today, demographically and socioeconomically, and what their numbers are likely to be over the next few decades. We begin with outlining the problems of defining who is included in this increasingly visible and influential segment of the U.S. population.

## *Who are the Hispanics?*

While "Hispanic" has become a convenient way to refer to Americans of Spanish heritage, the catchall term masks a variety of ethnic, racial, national, and cultural backgrounds. And within the U.S., the various "Hispanic" groups tend to be separated geographically and in their way of life. The four categories used by the U.S. Census Bureau are now most frequently taken to encompass the "Spanish-origin" or Hispanic population. These are, first, Mexican Americans, or "Chicanos," the largest group, living mostly in the Southwest. Many of these are not immigrants but "Hispanos" who trace their ancestry back to the Spanish colonialists and Indians who were the original inhabitants of the American Southwest. Next are Puerto Ricans, an intermixture of Spanish, Indian, and black, who, as U.S. citizens at birth, are not subject to immigration restrictions. Cubans, the smallest group, assumed numerical importance as an ethnic group in the U.S. after the 1959 Cuban Revolution. The "Other Hispanic" category, now the second largest of the four groups, covers people from other Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and from Spain. Many Hispanos also place themselves in this category on Census Bureau questionnaires. *Not* included among Hispanics are immigrants from non-Spanish-language Latin American countries such as French-speaking Haitians and Portuguese-speaking Brazilians.

Contrary to popular opinion, Hispanics do not all speak Spanish (11.1 million people reported speaking Spanish at home in the 1980 census, while the Hispanic count was 14.6 million) and not all are Roman Catholic, though 85 percent are estimated to be. The one thing shared by the four Hispanic groups is that all trace their heritage to Spanish-speaking nations. Using language heritage to sort out Hispanics, however, can present problems. For example, an immigrant from Argentina and one from Uruguay may clearly seem to be Hispanic, but what if the first is of Italian birth or descent and the second a German?

### *Defining the Hispanic population*

Defining any racial or ethnic group is a thorny problem. What characteristic determines race or ethnicity? Surname? Birthplace of parents, or grandparents? Language usage? Cultural affiliation? Any of these may help classify some persons as "Irish," "Chinese," "black," or "Hispanic," but none can delimit mutually exclusive categories for any population. Racial groups, such as white or black, are often easier to identify since racial intermarriage is still relatively rare in the U.S. But classifying ethnic groups is confused by intermarriage—common in the countries from which immigrants come and practically a national tradition in the U.S. Despite such problems, the Census Bureau has made much effort to come up with an acceptable definition of the Hispanic population which is needed for statistical measurements to back up such statements as "Hispanic mothers have more children than non-Hispanics," or to measure changes in the demographic and social characteristics of this popu-



7 3

***Table 1. Hispanic Population Counted in 1970 Census According to Six Identifiers: Total U.S. and Selected Areas***

| Identifier | United States | Southwestern states[a] | Middle Atlantic states[b] | Florida | Remaining states |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spanish origin | 9,072,602 | 5,008,556 | 1,749,363 | 405,036 | 1,909,647 |
| Spanish surname | — | 4,667,975 | — | — | — |
| Spanish language[c] | 9,589,216 | 5,662,700 | 1,873,051 | 451,382 | 1,602,083 |
| Spanish heritage[d] | 9,294,509 | 6,188,362 | 1,052,682 | 451,382 | 1,602,083 |
| Spanish language or surname | 10,114,878 | 6,188,362 | 1,873,051 | 451,382 | 1,602,083 |
| Spanish birth or parentage | 5,241,892 | 2,321,642 | 1,738,802 | 336,961 | 844,487 |

Source: Jacob S. Siegel and Jeffrey S. Passel, "Coverage of the Hispanic Population of the United States in the 1970 Census," *Current Population Reports*, Special Studies, Series P-23, No. 82, 1979.

[a]Southwestern states are Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas.
[b]Middle Atlantic states are New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania.
[c]Spanish language covers all persons of Spanish mother tongue and all other persons in families in which the head or wife reported Spanish mother tongue.
[d]Spanish heritage combines the following: persons of Spanish language or surname in the five southwestern states; persons of Puerto Rican birth or parentage in the three Middle Atlantic states; and persons of Spanish language in the remaining states and the District of Columbia.

Note: Different identifiers produce the same counts in states or regions where there is actually no difference in their definition. For example, in the Middle Atlantic states, "Spanish language" and "Spanish language or surname" counts are the same because the Spanish surname identifier was not used there, but only in the five southwestern states.

lation over time.[1]

Prior to the 1970 census, the concept of Hispanics as a group barely existed. Information on some components of the population, such as Mexicans, could be obtained from the usual census questions on a person's country of birth or that of parents, use of a language other than English at home, and ancestry. Some earlier census reports featured data on persons of Spanish surname and on Puerto Ricans.

But none of the identifiers used prior to 1970 could satisfy the need for a definition which could be applied nationwide and with reasonable consistency over time. The Census Bureau's painstakingly compiled list of some 8,000 Spanish surnames, for example, is only usable in five southwestern states where Spanish surnames are common (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas). Also, many of these surnames have close twins in Italian and Portuguese. And, of course, Spanish surnames can be lost or gained by marriage. A census question on birthplace or birthplace of parents can obviously account only for first- and second-generation Hispanics. A question on language usage in the home (either as a child, as was asked in 1970, or currently, as asked in 1980) misses Hispanics who do not use Spanish.

Thus we could expect that the different identifiers would produce different results, and they do, as seen in Table 1. These results are from the 1970 census, but they illustrate the point. We can see the limitation of birthplace or parentage data which identified only 5.2 million Hispanics nationwide. This question did perform well in the Middle Atlantic states in 1970 due to the predominance of recently arrived Puerto Ricans in the New York area, but, it did poorly in the five southwestern states.

Although none of these methods may be adequate for a consistent count of Hispanics from census to census, they do have real analytic value and should certainly be used. Knowing how many





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*Figure 1. The Spanish-Origin Question in the 1970 and 1980 Censuses*

**1970**

b. **Is this person's origin or descent**— *(Fill one circle)*

- O Mexican
- O Puerto Rican
- O Cuban
- O Central or South American
- O Other Spanish
- O No, none of these

**1980**

| 7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent?<br><br>*Fill one circle.* | No (not Spanish/Hispanic)<br>Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Amer., Chicano<br>Yes, Puerto Rican ■<br>Yes, Cuban<br>Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic |
|---|---|

**Instructions to the respondent for 1980 Spanish-origin question.**

> 7. A person is of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent if the person *identifies* his or her ancestry with one of the listed groups, that is, Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc. Origin or descent (ancestry) may be viewed as the nationality group, the lineage, or country in which the person or the person's parents or ancestors were born.

people speak Spanish at home helps track cultural assimilation. Birthplace or parentage separates first-generation Hispanics from second-generation Hispanics born in the U.S. But for counting the population, a more consistent method was needed.

### *The Spanish-origin question*

Enter the Spanish-origin census question. All of the above methods are based on *objective* characteristics, some of which, such as surname, can change during a person's lifetime. The Spanish-origin question is *subjective* in that it simply asks persons whether or not they identify themselves as Hispanic. It first appeared in the 1970 census as question 13b on the "long form" used with a 5 percent sample of households across the country, and did not actually ask about Spanish origin but went directly to categories, such as Mexican or Puerto Rican (see Figure 1). In 1980, the question appeared as item 7 on the "short form" received by all households. This was done to produce data for Hispanics in small geographic areas, eliminating the effects of sampling error.

The question has some advantages over objective methods. It can easily be repeated from census to census and will consistently count those persons who consider themselves to be of Spanish origin. But it also has some built-in disadvantages. Its performance depends on the tendency of individuals to identify themselves as Hispanics at any given time. This in turn can be influenced by such factors as the wording of the question, the language (Spanish-language questionnaires were available in 1980), the categories given as responses, and even the position of the question on the census form. The version used in 1980, honed in extensive pretests, was an improvement over 1970 (Figure 1). It placed the negative response ("No, not Spanish/Hispanic") first to make it easier for non-Hispanics to respond. It added the popular term "Chicano" to potential responses and eliminated "Central or South American," which in 1970 had picked up many non-Hispanics who in-



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> "I am an American and something else. The "else" is an ethnic Puerto Rican. And now I am confused with the new term Hispanic."
>
> *Edward Gonzales, Jr., Educator and Labor Organizer, New York Times, May 11, 1980.*

terpreted it to mean "Central or Southern United States" and Brazilians who are technically not Hispanic.[2] However, it kept the category "Other Spanish/ Hispanic" which is often checked by Hispanos of long ancestry in the U.S. who properly belong in the Mexican category. Also, it is possible that many people were still confused, like the educator quoted in the box above, even though the 1980 census form included guidelines for answering the question, as seen in Figure 1.

Despite imperfections, however, the Spanish-origin question does offer the possibility of a relatively consistent enumeration of Hispanics. The census figures derived from this question—9.1 million in 1970 and 14.6 million in 1980—are most often used as estimates of the U.S. Hispanic population as of those dates. And it has been adopted as the Hispanic identifier in the Census Bureau's monthly Current Population Survey, the primary source of information on the population between census years.

## *Population Growth and Ethnic Mix*

The Hispanic population of the U.S. numbers at least 15 million as of 1983, plus an uncounted number of illegal immigrants. The growth of this population began with the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in which Mexico ceded to the U.S. the territory which is now Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and part of Colorado. Many Hispanics in the U.S. Southwest thus trace their ancestry to Mexico in a very direct way. But the vast majority of today's Mexican-origin population is the result of immigration in the 20th century, beginning in the early 1900s with immigrants lured north to work in the farmlands of California and to build the railroads of the Southwest. This first immigration wave ended during the depression of the 1930s with the deportation of over 400,000 Mexicans, but picked up again during the 1940s with the *bracero* program. Designed to bring temporary workers north to alleviate U.S. labor shortages during World War II, the program brought in 4.8 million Mexicans before its demise in 1964.[3] Fueled by legal and illegal immigration plus relatively high fertility, the Mexican-American population has continued to grow, but its share of the total U.S. Hispanic population has been reduced to 60 percent from about 70 percent in 1950 with the influx of Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and "Other Hispanics" since then.

Puerto Ricans have had free access to the U.S. mainland as U.S. citizens since the Jones Act of 1917, long before the island became a Commonwealth with a unique relationship to the U.S. in 1952, after being a U.S. territory since the Spanish-American War of 1898. Less

Paul Conklin

*A Mexican-American family in El Paso, Texas. Mexican Americans were the first U.S. Hispanics and are still 60 percent of the total.*



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### *Table 2. Total U.S. and Hispanic Population: 1950-1980*

(Numbers in millions)

| Year | Total U.S. population | Hispanics | Hispanic population increase in preceding decade | Hispanic percent of U.S. population |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1950 | 151.3 | 4.0 | — | 2.7 |
| 1960 | 179.3 | 6.9 | 2.9 | 3.9 |
| 1970 | 203.2 | 10.5 | 3.6 | 5.2 |
| 1980 | 226.5 | 14.6 | 4.1 | 6.4 |

Sources: U.S. population: Bureau of the Census, various census reports; Hispanic population: JoAnne Willette, et al, *The Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Hispanic Population in the United States: 1950-1980*, report to the Department of Health and Human Services by Development Associates, Inc., and Population Reference Bureau, Inc., January 18, 1982.

than 70,000 Puerto Ricans had settled on the mainland by the time of the 1940 census, however. But in the 1950s alone, job opportunities and the advent of regular and cheap plane service between San Juan and New York City attracted a net influx of half a million Puerto Ricans to the mainland, primarily New York City—a tremendous flow for a country with a 1950 population of 2.2 million.[4]

Fewer than 50,000 Cubans lived in the U.S. before Castro overthrew the regime of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, many of them making cigars in Florida or New York City.[5] The first post-revolutionary wave of exiles brought about 260,000 largely affluent, professional Cubans to the U.S. before air traffic between the two countries was temporarily ended, following the 1962 missile crisis. A refugee airlift agreed upon by Castro and the Johnson Administration in 1965 brought in 344,000 more Cubans before Castro cut off emigration in 1973. Thousands more arrived clandestinely by small boat or through Mexico or Spain in the following years, climaxed by the mass influx of 125,000 Cubans in the Mariel boatlift which Castro permitted from April to September 1980.

Stimulated by changes in U.S. immigration law, numbers of immigrants from all other Spanish-speaking countries have increased dramatically from about 33,000 arriving in 1950-54 to nearly 300,000 in 1975-79, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).[6] These countries taken together have now replaced Mexico as the largest supplier of new legal immigrants to the U.S.

### *Growth since 1950*

With heavy immigration added to relatively high fertility, the U.S. Hispanic population has soared since 1950. While the total U.S. population grew by just under 50 percent from 1950 to 1980, the increase for Hispanics was about 265 percent, as seen in Table 2. The black population—the country's other significant minority—accounted for 9.9 percent of the U.S. population in 1950 and increased its share to 11.7 percent by 1980. In the same period, the Hispanic population went from about 2.7 to 6.4 percent of the U.S. total, making it without question the country's fastest-growing minority.

The 1950, 1960, and 1970 figures for Hispanics shown in Table 2 are estimates which attempt to make up for some of the deficiencies in the data for this population. Collection of data on all Hispanics began only with the 1970 census. The census count for Hispanics in 1970, based on the Spanish-origin question, was 9.1 million.[7] Using this as a base, the Census Bureau projected that the 1980 count would be 13.2 million.[8] The actual count (based on the 1980 Spanish-origin question) turned out to be 14.6 million—1.4 million higher.[9] The difference was probably due to better reporting by Hispanics in 1980.* The census was preceded by a well orchestrated

*The 14.6 million figure for 1980 is undoubtedly also an undercount of Hispanics actually in the U.S. on Census Day, April 1, 1980, but the Census Bureau has not yet completed its analysis of this undercount. For 1970, the Bureau estimated that the undercount for Hispanics fell somewhere between that of the white population (1.9 percent) and that of the black population (7.7 percent).



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### *Table 3. U.S. Hispanic Population, by Type: 1980*

| Type | Number (in thousands) | Percent | States with largest concentrations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Hispanic | 14,609 | 100.0 | California, Texas, New York |
| Mexican American | 8,740 | 59.8 | California, Texas, Illinois |
| Puerto Rican | 2,014 | 13.8 | New York, New Jersey, Illinois |
| Cuban | 803 | 5.5 | Florida, New Jersey, New York |
| Other Hispanic | 3,052 | 20.9 | California, New York, New Mexico |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Persons of Spanish Origin by State: 1980," *1980 Census of Population*, Supplementary Report, PC80-S1-7, August 1982.

campaign to improve minority cooperation and coverage, the Spanish-origin question was much improved and appeared early in the questionnaire sent to every household in the country, and the very awareness of Hispanics as a population had probably increased since 1970. Another part of the story may be the increased number of illegal immigrants during the 1970s, some of whom—reassured of anonymity—were willing to answer the questionnaire. It has now been estimated that the 1980 census count of 226.5 million for the total U.S. population included at least 2 million illegal immigrants, with about 1.3 million from Latin American countries (see page 27).

Starting from the 1980 Spanish-origin count of 14.6 million, the Hispanic population estimates shown in Table 2, prepared by the Population Reference Bureau for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, were derived by projecting the population back to 1950, using INS data on legal immigrants by country of birth and assumptions about Hispanic mortality based on available estimates. This procedure increases the 1970 figure from the original Spanish-origin census count of 9.1 million to 10.5 million. The estimates for the three decades indicate that the U.S. Hispanic population grew from about 4 million in 1950 to 14.6 million in 1980 and that the numbers added rose from about 2.9 million during the 1950s to about 4.1 million in the 1970s.

The ethnic mix of Hispanics has changed. Mexican Americans, the overwhelming majority before 1950, accounted for only 60 percent by 1980, with 8.7 million persons (see Table 3). Persons of Spanish origin from countries other than Mexico, Cuba, or Puerto Rico now number 3 million and account for one in every five Hispanics, a factor which lends even more diversity to this growing minority. Puerto Ricans rank third with a count of 2 million and 14 percent of the 1980 Hispanic population, and the 803,000 Cubans put them in fourth place with 6 percent.

## *Age and Sex Composition*

Hispanics as a whole are younger, on average, than both the general U.S. population and blacks. In 1980, the median age for the Hispanic population was 23, compared to 30 for the total U.S. population and 25 for the black population. (The median marks the point at which half the population is younger and half is older.) Neary one-third (32 percent) of Hispanics were younger than 15 and only 5 percent were 65 or older. By contrast, only 23 percent of all Americans were under 15 and 11 percent were age 65 or older.[10]

The youthfulness of the Hispanic population is due both to relatively high fertility and heavy immigration of young adults. These effects can be seen in the shape of the age-sex structure of the Hispanic population as of the 1980 census, contrasted with the pyramid for the total U.S. population (Figure 2). The relatively large



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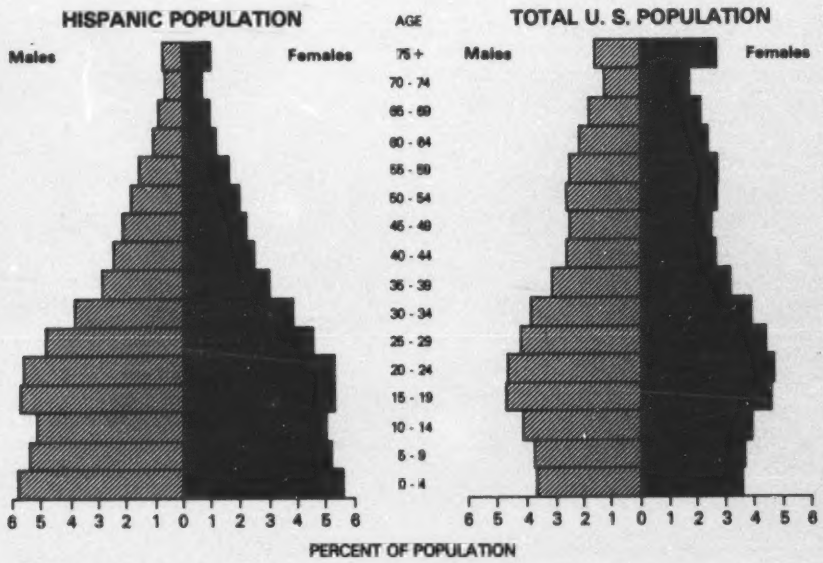
***Figure 2. Age-Sex Composition of the Hispanic and Total U.S. Population: 1980***




Source: Bureau of the Census, "Age, Sex, Race, and Spanish Origin of the Population by Regions, Divisions, and States: 1980," *1980 Census of Population*, Supplementary Report, PC80-S1-1, 1981.

proportion of children in the Hispanic pyramid reflects both the larger than average family sizes of Hispanics and the fact that a substantial proportion of immigrants are in the prime childbearing ages; in the last half of the 1970s, more than one-third of legal immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries were aged 20-34,[11] and this is undoubtedly also true of illegal immigrants. In the U.S. pyramid, the waxing and waning of the baby boom, which peaked from 1955 to 1964, is evident in the bulge at ages 15-24 and the constriction at younger ages.

As the baby boom generation passes out of the childbearing ages, succeeding U.S. birth cohorts will become smaller and smaller, if the U.S. rate of childbearing remains near the current low level of 1.8 children per woman. Among Hispanics, by contrast, continuing replenishment of the childbearing population through immigration, plus a fertility rate still about 2.5 children per woman—well above "replacement" level—guarantees larger cohorts of children for some time to come.

The Hispanic population is also somewhat more "male" than the U.S. average. The 1980 census counted 99 Hispanic men for every 100 women, while there were just 94 males for every 100 females in the total population. Though men slightly outnumber women among Hispanic immigrants as a whole, the main reason for this is the youthfulness of the Hispanic population. Compared to the general population, there are more Hispanics in the younger ages where males still outnumber females (about 105 males are born for every 100 females) and fewer in the older ages where women's longer life expectancy gives them the edge.



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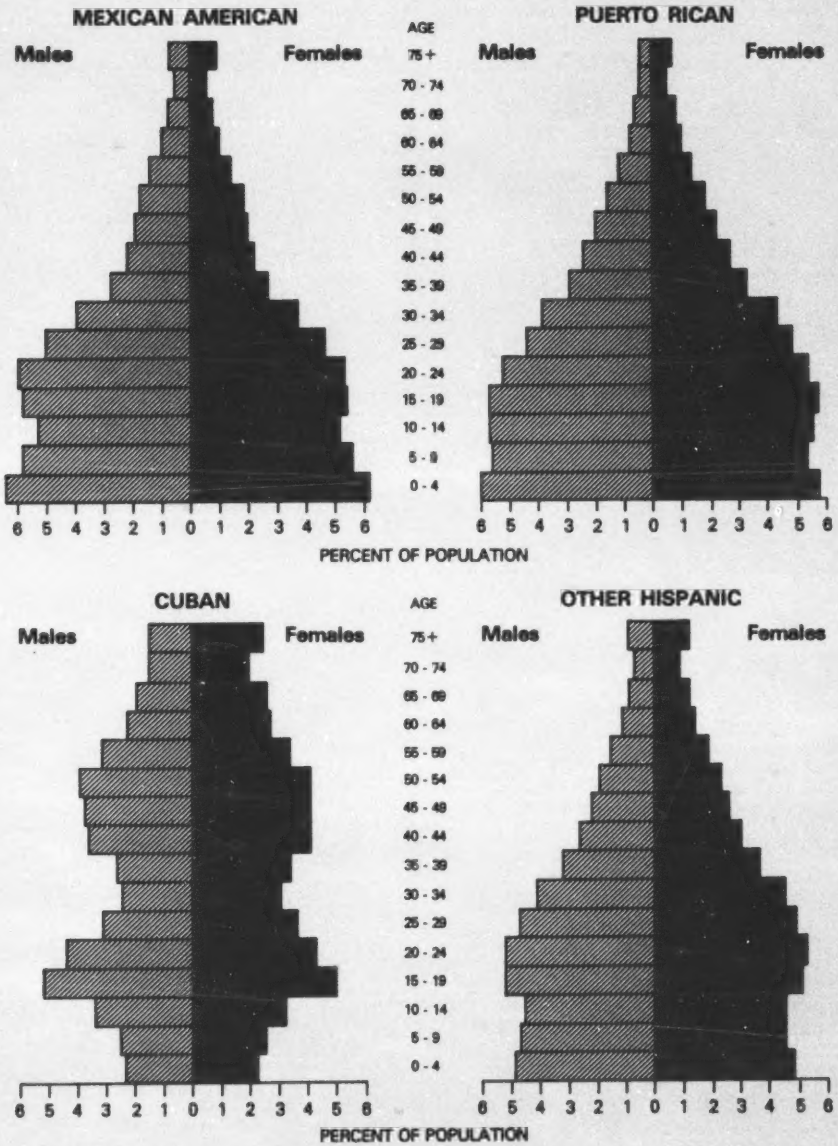
*Figure 3. Age-Sex Composition of the Four Hispanic Groups: 1980*




Sources: Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics*, PC80-1B, various state issues.



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Relative youthfulness and large proportions of children are also evident in the 1980 age-sex pyramids for the Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and "Other Hispanic" populations shown in Figure 3. Mexican Americans have the highest fertility of all Hispanic groups, as is apparent in the even broader base of their pyramid, and are the youngest, with a median age of just 22 in 1980. Their pyramid also has a slightly more pronounced bulge and excess of males in the main migration ages of 15-29 than those of Puerto Ricans and Other Hispanics.

The pyramid for Cubans is radically different. The bulges at ages 40-59 and 15-24 reflect the young and middle-aged Cubans who arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s and their children; the narrow base demonstrates Cubans' very low current fertility. Not shown in this pyramid are the further distortions in the age-sex composition of the Cuban population caused by the 125,000 Cubans, mostly young males, who arrived in the Mariel boatlift too late to be counted in the April 1, 1980, census. Because Cubans are just 6 percent of all U.S. Hispanics, their low fertility (even lower than the national average) and much older age (a median of 41 years in 1980) are outweighed in statistics on all Hispanics.

## *Where Hispanics Live*

Today there are Hispanics in every state of the U.S., including Vermont (which had the fewest in 1980, 3,304), and the outlying states of Alaska (9,507), and Hawaii (71,263). But Hispanics still cluster in certain states and metropolitan areas, where they have become a powerful—even dominating—influence. California, with 4.5 million Hispanics, was home to almost one of every three Spanish-origin residents counted in the 1980 census. Add in Texas, with nearly 3 million Hispanics, and New York state, with 1.7 million, and 63 percent of the Hispanic population in 1980 has been accounted for. Florida, with 858,000 Hispanics, ranked fourth in number of His-

### *Table 4. Top Nine States in Hispanic Population: 1970 and 1980*

(States with 250,000 or more Hispanics in 1980)

| State | 1970 Rank | 1970 Number of Hispanics | 1970 Percent distribution | 1980 Rank | 1980 Number of Hispanics | 1980 Percent distribution |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States, total | — | 9,072,602[a] | 100.00 | — | 14,608,673 | 100.0 |
| California | 1 | 2,369,292 | 26.1 | 1 | 4,544,331 | 31.1 |
| Texas | 2 | 1,840,648 | 20.3 | 2 | 2,985,824 | 20.4 |
| New York | 3 | 1,351,982 | 14.9 | 3 | 1,659,300 | 11.4 |
| Florida | 4 | 405,036 | 4.5 | 4 | 858,158 | 5.9 |
| Illinois | 5 | 393,204 | 4.3 | 5 | 635,602 | 4.4 |
| New Jersey | 7 | 288,488 | 3.2 | 6 | 491,883 | 3.4 |
| New Mexico | 6 | 308,340 | 3.4 | 7 | 477,222 | 3.3 |
| Arizona | 8 | 264,770 | 2.9 | 8 | 440,701 | 3.0 |
| Colorado | 9 | 225,506 | 2.5 | 9 | 339,717 | 2.3 |
| Total in nine top states | | 7,447,266 | 82.1 | | 12,432,738 | 85.1 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Persons of Spanish Origin by State," *1980 Census of Population*, Supplementary Report, PC80-S1-7, August 1982.

[a]Unadjusted 1970 Spanish-origin total which differs from 1970 total in Table 3. See text, page 9, for explanation.



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panics. Only five other states had more than 250,000 Hispanics apiece in 1980—Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. Together, these nine states contained 85 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population—12.4 million (see Table 4, and the map on page 2).

Hispanics made up 19 percent of the population in California, the nation's most populous state, and 21 percent in Texas, the third most populous state. They were almost 10 percent of the population in New York, the second most populous state. New Mexico's population has the highest proportion of Hispanics—37 percent—and they make up 16 percent of Arizona's population and 12 percent in Colorado.

Hispanics of different origins are even more geographically concentrated. In 1980, 73 percent of the 8.7 million Mexican Americans lived in California and Texas alone and another 10 percent in the other three southwestern states of Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Illinois, with more than 400,000, was the only state outside the Southwest with a sizable number of Mexican Americans. Fully 61 percent of the 2 million Puerto Ricans lived in New York and New Jersey, and another 6 percent in Illinois. Florida was home to nearly 59 percent of the 803,000 Cubans counted in the 1980 census and this one state became even more the Cuban center when an estimated 120,000 of the "Marielitos" later chose to resettle there.

The 3 million Hispanics in the "Other Hispanic" group were more scattered, but still only seven states had more than 100,000 each of this fourth group. In California, with the largest number (753,000), there were sizable communities of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans. New York, also with more than half a million "Other Hispanics," has attracted many Dominicans, Colombians, and Ecuadorans. Other Hispanics are also becoming increasingly evident in the Miami and Chicago areas. The "Other Hispanics" in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Illinois are mostly immigrants from Central and South American countries, while it is likely that the "Other Hispanics" in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado are largely Hispanos who preferred not to identify themselves as Mexican Americans in the census. California's "Other Hispanics" are a mixture of Hispanos and Central and South Americans.

Though the proportion of all Hispanics living in the nine most Hispanic states increased from 82 percent to 85 percent between 1970 and 1980 (see Table 4), the 1980 census actually showed that Hispanics are becoming less regionally concentrated. The proportion of Mexican Americans living in the five southwestern states dropped from 87 to 83 percent between 1970 and 1980, and the proportion of Puerto Ricans in New York, New Jersey, and Illinois declined from 80 to 67 percent. On the other hand, the percentage of Cubans living in Florida rose from 46 to 59 percent during the 1970s and the share of "Other Hispanics" living in California and New York went up from 28 to 43 percent.

### *City dwellers*

Though perceived by many as rural, Hispanics are a highly urban population. Fully 88 percent live in metropolitan areas, according to the 1980 census, compared to 75 percent of the general population and 81 percent of blacks.[12] Moreover, 50 percent of U.S. Hispanics live in the central cities of metropolitan areas. This is far more than the 30 percent of the general population living in central cities.

Table 5 (page 14) lists the 29 of the nation's 318 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas where Hispanics numbered more than 100,000 in 1980. Over 3½ million lived in the Los Angeles and New York areas alone—almost one-quarter of all Hispanics in the U.S. Mexican Americans are the largest Hispanic group in most of the 29 SMSAs listed in Table 5. However, Cubans are the most metropolitan of Hispanics; virtually 100 percent are metro dwellers in the four states with

## *Table 5. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas with 100,000 or More Hispanics in 1980*

| Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area[a] | Hispanics in SMSA | Hispanics in central city | Largest Hispanic group and its percent of all Hispanics in SMSA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA | 2,065,727 | 866,689 | Mexican, 80% |
| New York, NY-NJ | 1,493,081 | 1,405,957 | Puerto Rican, 60% |
| Miami, FL | 581,030 | 194,087 | Cuban, 70% |
| Chicago, IL | 580,592 | 422,061 | Mexican, 64% |
| San Antonio, TX | 481,511 | 421,774 | Mexican, 93% |
| Houston, TX | 424,901 | 281,224 | Mexican, 88% |
| San Francisco-Oakland, CA | 351,915 | 115,864 | Mexican, 54% |
| El Paso, TX | 297,001 | 265,819 | Mexican, 95% |
| Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA | 289,791 | 81,671 | Mexican, 87% |
| Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, CA | 286,331 | 145,253 | Mexican, 81% |
| San Diego, CA | 275,176 | 130,610 | Mexican, 83% |
| Dallas, Ft. Worth, TX | 249,613 | 159,778 | Mexican, 89% |
| McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg, TX | 230,212 | 86,393 | Mexican, 96% |
| San Jose, CA | 226,611 | 140,574 | Mexican, 78% |
| Phoenix, AZ | 198,999 | 115,572 | Mexican, 89% |
| Denver-Boulder, CO | 173,362 | 94,933 | Mexican, 63% |
| Albuquerque, NM | 164,200 | 112,084 | Other Hispanic, 56% |
| Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito, TX | 161,632 | 116,076 | Mexican, 86% |
| Corpus Cristi, TX | 158,123 | 108,175 | Mexican, 96% |
| Fresno, CA | 150,820 | 51,489 | Mexican, 93% |
| Jersey City, NJ | 145,163 | 41,672 | Puerto Rican, 38% |
| Newark, NJ | 132,356 | 61,254 | Puerto Rican, 47% |
| Philadelphia, PA-NJ | 116,280 | 63,570 | Puerto Rican, 68% |
| Oxnard-Simi Valley-Ventura, CA | 113,241 | 64,223 | Mexican, 89% |
| Tucson, AZ | 111,418 | 82,189 | Mexican, 90% |
| Nassau-Suffolk, NY | 101,418 | [b] | Puerto Rican, 49% |
| Sacramento, CA | 101,692 | 39,160 | Mexican, 77% |

Sources: Bureau of the Census, "Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Standard Consolidated Statistical Areas: 1980," *1980 Census of Population*, Supplementary Report, PC80-S1-5, October 1981; and Cheryl Russell, "The News About Hispanics," *American Demographics*, March 1983, p. 17.

[a]A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (renamed Metropolitan Statistical Area as of July 1983) is a county with a central city (or urbanized area) of at least 50,000 population, plus adjacent counties that are economically linked with that county.
[b]Does not contain a central city.

the most Cubans (Florida, New Jersey, New York, and California).

Miami is the undisputed Cuban center. Over half the country's Cuban Americans live in the Miami area where Cubans make up 70 percent of Hispanics. The Cuban influence has transformed Miami from a resort town to a year-round commercial center with linkages throughout Latin America and a leading bilingual cultural center. The Los Angeles area is the Mexican-American metropolitan capital. Mexicans comprise 80 percent of Hispanics in the area, 22 percent of the total population, and one-fifth of all Mexican Americans in the country. San Antonio, however, where Mexican Americans make up 93 percent of Hispanics and are also the population majority in the central city, can claim to be the first large U.S. city with a Mexican-American mayor—Henry Cisneros, elected in 1981. Puerto Ricans began flowing into New York City during the 1950s and, with 43 percent of



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all Puerto Ricans in the country, the New York metropolitan area is still the hub of Puerto Rican life on the mainland.

## Fertility

Although immigration may appear to be the major spur to the growth of the U.S. Hispanic population, an estimated two-thirds of that growth actually stems from Hispanics' relatively high fertility, combined with mortality that is probably no higher than that of non-Hispanics. The available data suggest that the fertility of Hispanic women as a group—though lower than it was two decades ago—is about 60 percent higher than the non-Hispanic average and 50 percent higher than the average for all U.S. women. It is also higher than black fertility. Mexican-American women have the highest fertility among Hispanics, while Cuban women's fertility is far below even that of non-Hispanic women.

Hispanic fertility is difficult to estimate because accurate counts of the "true" Hispanic population are still so elusive and systematic registration of births by Hispanic origin began only in 1978 and so far covers only 22 states (though an estimated 90 percent of the Hispanic population). One clue, however, is the "child-woman ratio," or the number of children under age five per 1,000 women aged 15-44, calculated from the 1980 census. As seen in Table 6, this ratio was 462 for Hispanic women, 55 percent higher than the ratio of 298 for non-Hispanic women of childbearing age and 26 percent higher than the black ratio of 366. Also, as already noted, 32 percent of the total Hispanic population counted in the 1980 census were children under age 15. This compares with 29 percent in the black population and 22 percent among all non-Hispanics.

Table 7 shows birth rates and fertility rates for 1979 that could be computed by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) for nine of the 19 states where births were by then being recorded by Hispanic origin of mother and father. The most recently published from birth registration information, these 1979 rates cover less than 60 percent of the Hispanic population and exclude the heavily Hispanic states of Texas and New Mexico, which, along with Georgia, began registration of births by Hispanic origin only in 1980. The "crude" birth rate for all Hispanics of 25.5 births per 1,000 population was 73 percent higher than the birth rate of 14.7 per 1,000 of the non-Hispanic population. However, the gap was less when measured by the number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age (15-44), a more accurate measure of

### *Table 6. Child-Woman Ratio and Percentage of Children Among Hispanics, Non-Hispanics, and Blacks: 1980*

| Population | Children aged 0-4 per 1,000 women aged 15-44 | Percent of population under age 15 |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 462 | 32.0 |
| Non-Hispanic | 298 | 22.0 |
| Black | 366 | 28.7 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Age, Sex, Race, and Spanish Origin of the Population by Regions, Divisions, and States: 1980," *1980 Census of Population*, Supplementary Report, PC80-S1-1, 1981.

### *Table 7. Birth Rates and Fertility Rates, by Hispanic Origin: Nine States, 1979*

| Ethnic group | Births per 1,000 population | Births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 |
|---|---|---|
| All origins | 15.6 | 66.7 |
| Non-Hispanic | 14.7 | 63.2 |
| All Hispanic | 25.5 | 100.5 |
| Mexican American | 29.6 | 119.3 |
| Puerto Rican | 22.6 | 80.7 |
| Cuban | 8.6 | 39.7 |
| Other Hispanic | 25.7 | 95.9 |

Source: Stephanie J. Ventura, "Births of Hispanic Parentage, 1979," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Supplement, May 1982.

Note: The nine states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio.



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fertility. Here the 100.5 rate for Hispanic women as a whole was 59 percent higher than the rate of 63.2 for non-Hispanic women, but only 51 percent higher than the rate of 66.7 births per 1,000 among all women aged 15-44 in the nine reporting states. The latter results tally well with results from the Census Bureau's June 1980 Current Population Survey. Among the 36,000 women aged 18-44 included in the nationwide sample, there were 107 births per 1,000 Hispanic women in the 12 months preceding the survey.[13] This rate was also 51 percent higher than the rate for all women—71—and it was 27 percent higher than the black rate of 84.

The Mexican-American rate of 119.3 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 shown in Table 7 is the highest among the four Hispanic groups. The rates for Puerto Ricans (80.7) and "Other Hispanic" women (95.9) are also much higher than the rates for non-Hispanics (63.2) and for all women (66.7). The Cuban rate of 39.7 is far below all others. Stephanie Ventura, author of the NCHS report, attributes this partly to the relatively older age of Cuban women in Florida (more of those aged 15-44 are in the low-fertility years of 35-44 than are their Mexican and Puerto Rican counterparts), but it probably also reflects the low family-size preferences of the relatively affluent and better educated Cuban population.[14]

### *Reasons for higher Hispanic fertility*

Except for Cubans, Hispanics have less education, lower family incomes, and are much more likely to be living in poverty than the general U.S. population, as we shall see later. This undoubtedly explains much of their higher fertility, for these factors are correlated with relatively high fertility among all U.S. groups. The Census Bureau's June 1980 survey, for example, found a rate of 94 births per 1,000 women in families with incomes under $5,000 per year compared to just 49 per 1,000 women in families with incomes of $25,000 and over. The NCHS found that only 47 percent of all Hispanic women and 37 percent of Mexican-American women reported to have had a birth in 1979 had completed at least 12 years of schooling, compared to 78 percent among the non-Hispanic mothers and 77 percent among Cubans. Ventura comments that these lower levels of schooling among non-Cuban Hispanics were partly due to "the relatively larger proportion of births to teenagers among Hispanic mothers."[15] Fully 19 percent of Hispanic women in the study who had a birth in 1979 were under age 20, compared to 15 percent for all mothers. The proportion of teenage births for Mexican women was 20 percent and a still higher 23 percent for Puerto Rican women.

Traditional preferences for large families in the countries from which most Hispanics originate probably also play a role. Cuba currently has an exceptionally low fertility rate for a developing country—just 1.8 births per women, the same as that of the U.S.[16] Puerto Rico's rate of 2.7 is considerably higher, but still well below the Latin American average of 4.3 births per woman. More typical is Mexico's experience. At the beginning of the 1970s, Mexico's fertility rate was over 7 births per woman. However, in less than a decade it has dropped to about 4.7 births per woman in the wake of a vigorous government family planning program.[17] Other Latin American countries have now launched family planning programs to reduce population growth and it is probable that many recent Hispanic immigrants to the U.S. have had some experience with contraception.

To judge from a 1979 survey of 2,100 women of childbearing age living on the U.S. side of the Mexican border, contraceptive use is quite high among Hispanics in the U.S., but not so high as for non-Hispanics. Some 66 percent of the currently married Hispanic women surveyed were using contraception, compared to 75 percent among "Anglos" (white, non-Hispanic).[18] However, the differences were not significant among

***Table 8. Births to Date and Total Births Expected in Lifetime, Hispanic and All Married Women: 1973, 1975, 1978, 1981***

(Numbers are births per currently married woman)

| Year and group | Total, aged 18-34 | | Women 18-24 | | Women 30-34 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Births to date | Lifetime births expected | Births to date | Lifetime births expected | Births to date | Lifetime births expected |
| **Hispanic women** | | | | | | |
| 1973 | 2.1 | 3.0 | 1.1 | 2.6 | 3.3 | 3.8 |
| 1975 | 1.9 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 2.2 | 3.0 | 3.2 |
| 1978 | 1.8 | 2.6 | 1.1 | 2.4 | 2.8 | 3.0 |
| 1981 | 1.9 | 2.6 | 1.1 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.8 |
| **All women** | | | | | | |
| 1973 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| 1975 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 2.6 |
| 1978 | 1.5 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.4 |
| 1981 | 1.5 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 2.2 |

Source: Carolyn C. Rogers, "Fertility of American Women: June 1981," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 378, April 1983, Table 1.

women under 35, which suggests that younger Hispanic married women may be about as likely to practice contraception as their non-Hispanic counterparts. Never-married Hispanic women were only half as likely to be using contraception as single Anglo women, however, though equal proportions in both groups (12 percent) reported that they were sexually active.

### *Closing the gap*

Although Hispanic fertility is still well above the national average, there is evidence that it has been falling in concert with that of all U.S. women since the mid-1950s. This suggests that the gap should eventually be closed.

Using census data on "own children," demographers Robert Rindfuss and James Sweet calculated that Hispanic women's fertility dropped by 25 percent between 1955 and 1969. A study by the Centers for Disease Control noted a similar decrease from 1970 to 1977 among Spanish-surnamed women in Texas.[19] Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey displayed in Table 8 show that the decline continues. In 1973, Hispanic married women aged 30-34 reported that they had had 3.3 births to date; by 1981, the average for such women was down to 2.5. In 1981, these women still expected to have an average of 2.8 children during their lifetime, compared to 2.2 for all married women aged 30-34. But young Hispanic married women aged 18-24 in 1981 said they expected an average of 2.3, virtually the same as the 1981 national average of 2.2 for all married women aged 18-24.

Thus, the fertility of U.S. Hispanic women as a group—now probably about 2.5 births apiece—is likely to continue to decline. Actual convergence with the U.S. national average may be somewhat delayed, however, as each year brings a new wave of legal and illegal immigrants reared in traditions of somewhat larger families. From a demographic standpoint, it is also significant that Hispanic fertility is still well above the "replacement" level of about two children per woman needed to stop population growth in the long run, and may remain above that level for some time to come.



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## *Mortality and Health*

In mortality levels there may be no overall gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics; in fact, Hispanic life expectancy may now be even slightly higher than that of all U.S. white persons and certainly higher than that of blacks. But this conjecture is based only on studies of Hispanic mortality in Texas and one in California. So far, there are no nationally representative mortality data for Hispanics.

This will be rectified later in 1983 when the NCHS plans to issue a first report on Hispanic mortality in the 22 states that now include a question about Hispanic origin on death certificates as well as on birth certificates.[20] This question has proved to be more of a problem for death registration, however. Birth certificates are filled out by hospital staff with the mother available to respond to the ethnic query, but death certificates are completed by funeral directors who must rely on the often less reliable information supplied by relatives, friends, or neighbors, or on their own observation. Compliance with the request for Hispanic-origin information has often been poor or arbitrary. California, for example, has not coded this question for half of its recently reported death certificates and in New Mexico, all certificates not checked for the ethnic identifier are assumed to be non-Hispanic.

A study based on Texas State Department of Health data for 1970 revealed life expectancies at birth for the Spanish-surnamed population of the state very close to those of the national population at the time: 67.2 years compared to the national average of 67.1 among males, and 73.4 versus 74.8 years among females.[21] Two studies of age-specific death patterns derived from 1970 census data for California and Texas found higher infant mortality and much higher mortality for young adult males among the Spanish-surnamed

***Table 9. Hispanic, Black, and All Families: 1981***

| Family type and presence of own children under 18 | Hispanic | Black | All families |
|---|---|---|---|
| All families | | | |
| Number (in thousands) | 3,235 | 6,317 | 60,309 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Married-couple families | 73.1 | 53.7 | 81.7 |
| With own children | 51.7 | 30.7 | 41.3 |
| No own children | 21.5 | 23.0 | 40.4 |
| Single-parent/ child families | 18.2 | 30.6 | 10.4 |
| Mother and own children | 16.3 | 28.9 | 9.3 |
| Father and own children | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.1 |
| Other families | 8.7 | 15.7 | 7.8 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Household and Family Characteristics: March 1981," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 371, May 1982, Tables 12 and 13.

population than for the U.S. white population.[22] Nevertheless, life expectancies at birth for Hispanics were similar to those of non-Hispanics. The first study based on 1980 census data for the state of Texas suggests, with caveats on the quality of the data, that Hispanic life expectancy may now be higher than that of the total U.S. white population.[23] Among males, life expectancy was 71.4 years for the Texas Spanish-surnamed population, compared to 70.2 for all white males in the U.S. in 1978, and for females the figures were 79.5 and 77.2, respectively. Black life expectancies in 1978 were 64.0 years for males and 72.7 for females.[24]

For Hispanics other than Mexican Americans (who predominate in Texas and California) there is only indirect evidence on life expectancy. Puerto Rico and Cuba both have good vital registration data that indicate that their life expectancies are near or even above U.S. levels. Thus, immigrants from these countries probably also have mortality rates on a par with U.S. national averages. "Other Hispanics," of course, come from many countries, some with



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***Table 10. Marital Status of Hispanic, Black, and All Persons Aged 15 and Over: 1981***

(Numbers in percent)

| Marital Status | Hispanic | | Black | | All persons | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Never married | 34.0 | 26.0 | 41.0 | 33.7 | 29.4 | 22.5 |
| Married, spouse present | 55.2 | 52.6 | 41.1 | 32.8 | 60.2 | 54.8 |
| Married, spouse absent | 5.2 | 7.8 | 7.0 | 11.4 | 2.8 | 3.7 |
| Separated | 2.5 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 10.1 | 1.9 | 2.9 |
| Other | 2.6 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| Widowed | 1.6 | 6.0 | 3.7 | 12.7 | 2.3 | 11.9 |
| Divorced | 4.0 | 7.7 | 7.3 | 9.5 | 5.3 | 7.1 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1981," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 372, 1982, Table 1.

life expectancies well below those of men and women in the U.S. Immigrants may be healthier than their compatriots who stay at home, but there is no information on this or on how "Other Hispanics" tie into the U.S. health care system.

Considerably more will soon be known about the health of U.S. Hispanics. Launched in the fall of 1982 by NCHS, the Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey is currently collecting information from a sample of 16,000 Mexican Americans in the Southwest, Cubans in Miami, and Puerto Ricans in New York City on medical histories, diet, nutrition, physical measurements, and use and need for health services. Results from the two-year study are to be published in late 1985.

## *Family and Marital Status*

Hispanics are less likely than the general U.S. population to be living in married-couple families and much more likely to be in families headed by a single parent, almost always the mother. But in both respects they fare much better than blacks.

In 1981, as Table 9 shows, 73 percent of the nation's 3.2 million Hispanic families were headed by a married couple, compared to 82 percent of all families and just 54 percent of black families. Fifty-two percent of Hispanic families had children living at home—higher than the 41 percent among all families.

Single parents with children under 18 comprised 18 percent of all Hispanic families. This was three-quarters higher than the proportion among all families (10 percent) but well below the proportion among blacks (31 percent). Fully 16 percent of Hispanic families in 1981 were maintained by a woman alone, compared to 9 percent among all families. Puerto Rican families are far more likely than other Hispanic families to be maintained by a woman—40 percent were in 1979, versus just 15 percent among Mexican Americans and 17 percent among other Hispanics, including Cubans.[25]

Because of their higher fertility, Hispanic family households are larger than the national average. In 1981, Hispanic families averaged 3.9 persons each, compared to 3.3 among all families and 3.7 for blacks.[26]

### *Marital status*

Although Hispanics marry as readily as all Americans, they are somewhat more likely to separate or divorce, which ex-





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plains their higher proportion of female-headed families. Fourteen percent of Hispanic women aged 15 and over were separated or divorced in 1981—more than the 10 percent for all women this age but, again, lower than the proportion among black women, which was nearly 20 percent (Table 10, page 19). In the same year there were 146 divorced Hispanic women for every 1,000 Hispanic women who were married and living with their husbands.[27] For all women, the ratio was 129, and for black women, 289. On the other hand, 53 percent of Hispanic women over 15 were married and living with their husbands in 1981, very close to the 55 percent among all women. Hispanics tend to marry somewhat earlier than other Americans do. In 1981, about 25 percent of Hispanic women under age 20 were or had been married, compared to 15 percent among all teenage women and only 7 percent among black women under 20.

Thus, while the marital experience of Hispanics is more similar to the U.S. average than that of blacks, Hispanics are somewhat more likely to dissolve their marriages. This leads in turn to somewhat higher proportions of female-headed households, which is a factor in Hispanics' lower family incomes, as noted later.

## *Immigration*

Hispanics' increasing visibility on the American scene reflects a striking shift in the pattern of immigration to the U.S. From 1930 to 1960, Europeans still dominated the immigrant influx—41 percent from Northern and Western Europe, and 17 percent from Southern and Eastern Europe. Latin Americans made up only 15 percent of total legal immigration. Since 1960, Latin Americans have averaged 40 percent of the total. By 1975-79, they were up to 42 percent, outpacing legal immigrants from Asia (39 percent) and Europe (down to 13 percent).[28] The total numbers have also been rising. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) statistics put the number of Hispanic immigrants entering the country legally at 956,000 during the 1950s, 1.3 million in the 1960s, and 1.4 million in the 1970s. Added to this is a growing, if unknown, number of illegal immigrants arriving from Latin America.

This shift in the origins of immigrants has had all the more impact on the makeup of the U.S. population because net immigration has become an increasingly important part of annual population growth as fertility has declined. In 1981, for example, it has been estimated that natural increase (births minus deaths) accounted for 57 percent of population growth; 43 percent was contributed by 1.2 million immigrants—480,000 legal immigrants, 217,000 refugees, and an estimated 500,000 illegal immigrants.[29]

Behind the shift are some stark demographic and economic figures. Latin America's labor force is growing by 4 million a year; that of Mexico and the rest of Central America by 1.2 million a year. Forty percent of their current work force is unemployed or working only a few hours a week or days in the year.[30] Per capita income for all Latin America was $2,063 in 1981. For the U.S.—even as the recession deepened—it was $12,530.[31]

Equally important in the shift to Latin American predominance among immigrants was the change in U.S. policy signaled by passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which came into force in 1968. Responding to an increased influx of Latin American immigrants, this imposed for the first time a numerical limit on legal immigration from the Western Hemisphere—120,000 annual arrivals, admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. At the same time, Eastern Hemisphere countries became subject to a 170,000 overall ceiling, plus a 20,000 annual per-country limit based on a complicated preference system which stressed job skills and reunification with close family members already in the U.S. This abolished a quota system in effect since the 1920s that had favored immigrants from North-

ern and Western Europe.

The result was an increase in the percentage of legal immigrants from non-European countries. It also left many would-be Mexican migrants to the U.S. without legal means of entry, coming as it did just after Congress had ended the *bracero* program which, at its peak, had brought to the U.S. over 400,000 temporary Mexican workers annually.[32] Without the visa preference system, there was little control over legal admissions of Latin Americans. To change this and put Latin America on an "equal footing" with the rest of the world, the U.S. in 1977 extended the visa preference system and the 20,000 per-country annual limit to the Western Hemisphere. This put the most severe restriction ever on immigration from the Western Hemisphere and probably stimulated illegal immigration of persons who did not qualify for a preference or refused to wait out the many years it often now takes to gain clearance.

In 1978, the hemisphere quotas were replaced with a single worldwide ceiling of 290,000, later changed to 270,000 excluding refugees, with no more than 20,000 from any one country. Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens are admitted in addition to the 270,000 limit, however, which raised the total of legal immigrants to 480,000 in 1981, for example. Another component of the legal influx are refugees, for which quotas are set annually under the terms of the Refugee Act of 1980; 140,000 refugee slots were allocated in 1982. The 125,000 Cubans of the Mariel boatlift, along with 10,000 Haitians who also sought refuge in the U.S. during 1980, were admitted under still another category as special "entrants."

The growing share of Latin Americans among immigrants has aroused public concern about the impact on American standards and values of an ethnically and culturally distinct group endowed with socioeconomic characteristics perceived as inferior to those of the "average" American. Forgotten are the similar concerns voiced at the turn of the century when immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe began to outnumber those from Northern and Western Europe. The degradation of U.S. society predicted at that time has obviously not come to pass.

National Council of La Raza

*Jobs are the lure for Hispanic immigrants to the U.S.*

One issue unique to Hispanics, however, is that they share a common language. This has helped them develop a group identity and increased leverage in demands for special attention and services. It has also provoked a negative response from those who fear the U.S. will be forced into bilingualism, or at least the sort of linguistic factionalism most recently evident in Canada. In 1981, now retired Senator S. I. Hayakawa proposed a resolution to amend the U.S. Constitution to make English the country's official language. Voters in Dade County, Florida, where Miami is located, in November 1980 overturned a countywide policy of bilingualism adopted in 1973.

In numbers is strength, however. Thus Hispanics are likely to continue to dominate immigration to the U.S. to the disadvantage of white non-Hispanics and blacks from other countries who currently

***Table 11. Hispanic Immigration into the U.S., by Ethnic Group: 1950-1980***

| Ethnic group | 1950-59 | | 1960-69 | | 1970-79 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of migrants | Percent of total | Number of migrants | Percent of total | Number of migrants | Percent of total |
| Mexican | 293,000 | 30.7 | 431,000 | 33.2 | 567,000 | 40.8 |
| Cuban | 71,000 | 7.4 | 249,000 | 19.2 | 278,000 | 20.0 |
| Puerto Rican | 480,000 | 50.2 | 222,000 | 17.1 | 41,000 | 3.0 |
| Other Hispanic | 112,000 | 11.7 | 397,000 | 30.6 | 503,000 | 36.2 |

Sources: Mexican, Cuban, Other Hispanic: Immigration and Naturalization Service annual reports 1950-1979, Table 9; Puerto Rican: Estimated from Puerto Rican census and vital statistics.

make up little of the flow. The U.S. became more ethnically and culturally diverse as the result of earlier shifts in the profile of immigrants and this can be expected to occur again with the increase in Hispanics. Legitimate questions remain about the costs and benefits of reorganizing society and how fast that should happen. More easily influenced by policymakers than fertility and mortality—the other two variables that shape a country's population growth and composition—immigration is likely to remain a much debated issue in the U.S. for some time to come.

### *Legal immigration diversity*

Each of the four Hispanic groups has its own unique immigration history and, once arrived, has generally settled in different regions of the U.S., as we have seen. There are also differences in the amount that immigration has contributed to each group's growth since 1950—almost all for Cubans and "Other Hispanics," and very little since the 1960s for the Puerto Ricans.

Data on legal immigration for Mexicans, Cubans, and Other Hispanics are drawn from INS records. Puerto Ricans, who have unrestricted access to the U.S., do not appear in INS records. To estimate their net migration one must use a residual procedure involving two Puerto Rican census counts and registration of births and deaths for the decade they span. Drawing on these two sources, Table 11 shows immigration into the U.S. of each of the four groups for the three decades from 1950 to 1980.

During the 1950s, Puerto Ricans accounted for half of all Hispanic immigration, providing the U.S. with a net gain of nearly half a million. This movement, with one of every six Puerto Ricans moving to the U.S. during the decade, ranks as one of the most dramatic voluntary exoduses on record. It was driven by the promise of jobs—any jobs—as an escape from the island's stagnant agrarian economy, cheap plane fares, and the freedom of entry accorded Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens.

A sharp rise in immigration in the last half of the 1950s boosted Mexican immigration to almost 300,000 for the decade. The number grew by about 140,000 in each of the next two decades, yielding a total for the 1970s of just under 570,000. Mexico ranked as the largest single contributor to U.S. legal immigration over this 20-year span and accounted for over 40 percent of all Hispanic immigration.

Cuban immigration also grew dramatically over the three decades. Although the INS statistics shown in Table 11 add to 527,000 Cuban immigrants for 1960-80, the actual number of Cuban arrivals was close to 640,000, with over 70 percent occurring during the 1960s. Such large numbers of Cubans could only enter the U.S. by assigning them special status as political refugees or "parolees." But the INS records such individuals' entries only when their status is adjusted to "immigrant."



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Touched off by Castro's rise to power in 1959, Cuban legal immigration subsequently rose and fell in concert with shifts in both U.S. and Cuban government policies, as we have seen—surging in the first years after the revolution and in the late 1960s and early 1970s, ebbing after the 1962 missile crisis and following Castro's cutoff of emigration in 1973. The latest and largest influx of Cubans into the U.S. began when an April 1980 rush on the Peruvian embassy in Havana by a crowd demanding asylum drew a sudden response from Castro that whoever wanted to leave the island was welcome to go. By December 1980, 125,000 had arived in the U.S., transported in a flotilla of boats sent to collect them from the port of El Mariel. These refugees were set off from their predecessors not only by their numbers but also by their socioeconomic characteristics. Most stemmed from "urban working and lower class origins," as had Cubans arriving in the early 1970s, while the first waves of post-revolutionary refugees had been "displaced bourgeoisie"—well educated, middle and upper class professionals and businesspeople alienated by the new regime.[33]

One ramification of the timing of the Mariet boatlift, which began just after completion of the 1980 census, was to undermine the relevancy of census data on the Cuban population. Close to 15 percent of the 1981 U.S. Cuban population was not in residence at the time of the April 1, 1980, census.

Comparing the 1980 census count of Cubans (803,000) with the number estimated to have emigrated to the U.S. from 1959 up to the census date (670,000) indicates that some 80 percent of the 1980 population are first-generation immigrants. The Mariel arrivals would, of course, further increase this percentage.

The Other Hispanics are shown in Table 11 to have had the largest gain in immigration over the 30-year interval. From 112,000 and 12 percent of Hispanic immigration in the 1950s, they grew to 503,000 and 36 percent of the total in the 1970s, putting them into second place after Mexicans in their contribution to Hispanic immigration for the decade. For the 1975-79 period, they were actually in first place, as noted earlier. Of course, this total represents immigration from 16 separate nations. The largest contingents come from the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Argentina, and Ecuador, joined, in recent years, by growing numbers of escapees from the political turmoil in Nicaragua and El Salvador. This increase in Other Hispanic immigration partly reflects growing population pressures in the countries from which they come. Current population growth in these 16 countries averages over 2 percent a year—a rate at which a population doubles in just 35 years. This alone foretells for this group an ever-growing dominance in Hispanic legal immigration totals.

Paul Conklin

*Cubans in Miami.*

After holding first place during the 1950s, Puerto Rican net immigration dwindled to just 41,000 and 3 percent of the total in the 1970s. Why was this? With an island population of less than 2.4 milion in 1960 and fertility on the decline, it would have been impossible for Puerto



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### *The Story of a Cuban in the U.S.*

I am descended partly from Spaniards who migrated to Cuba and partly from freed black slaves. My mother's father was a laborer with little education. My grandfather on my father's side had his own business making salt from seawater. He had the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in accounting from a Cuban university and was once mayor of Guantanamo, where they lived.

My father also has a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Havana and my mother graduated from high school. I am the oldest of their two sons and was born in Cuba. My brother was born after we migrated to New York City.

My father moved to New York City for a while in 1946, dreaming of becoming a boxer, but this did not work out, and he returned to Cuba and worked for his father. My parents were married in 1948 and we migrated to New York City in 1954. The revolution had begun in Cuba but this was not the main reason my parents left.

At first my father worked in factories and drove a taxi but finally in 1967 he got a job as an accountant with a community action program that provided services for Hispanics. These programs that were started in the late 1960s and early 1970s provided an opening into the mainstream of American life for many immigrants like my father whose English was poor.

My grandfather's salt business was nationalized after Castro took over in Cuba in 1959 and my grandparents came to New York City in 1961. They were not allowed to take anything except the clothes they wore and lost everything—their business, savings, home, furniture, jewelry. My grandfather also spoke little English and worked as an elevator operator and did odd jobs for ten years until he retired and moved to Miami. He died last year.

My uncle who is a physician could not get a visa to leave Cuba until 1968. He also was not allowed to take anything out of Cuba when he left. He went to New York City at first and then to Kansas where he took a year of medical residency so he could become licensed in the U.S. Now he is licensed in Florida and practices in Miami.

I attended the City College of New York. I was married in my junior year and took some night courses after that, but never finished. My wife and I have a girl of eleven and a boy of nine. My wife works as a reservationist for a large airline. I began working in New York City in community action and drug abuse programs but there were not many drug abuse programs serving Hispanics in New York so I was transferred to Washington, D.C. in the mid-1970s.

My parents also moved to Washington shortly after that. My father started his own accounting business which has some of the latest computer equipment. My younger brother works for a trading company in the Washington, D.C., area.

Rico to continue to export half a million residents each decade. But other factors also played a role. For one, pressure on the home job market was relieved by the exodus of earlier emigrants. Economic opportunities may still have been brighter in the U.S. but not enough to warrant the wrench of leaving home. Deciding to stay was also made more feasible by increases in U.S. government welfare support, combined with remittances from family members who had ventured to the mainland.

Unique to Puerto Rican immigration, however, is the fact that the net migration figures mask a large movement of people back and forth from the island, which unrestricted entry to the U.S. permits. Puerto Ricans have been characterized as having "one foot on the mainland and one on the island." Detailed figures for the 1970s show a net flow back to Puerto Rico of people aged 35 and over and older children aged 5-19, but this was offset by a larger net influx into the U.S. of persons aged 20-29 and children under age five. This suggests that young adults are lured to the U.S. with their

children by the prospect of better economic opportunities and later choose to return to the island.

### *Sex and age of legal immigrants*

The characteristic ages and sex of 1950-80 immigrants, which helped shape the age-sex composition of the 1980 resident Hispanic population, also varied among the four groups. Women consistently outnumbered men among immigrants from Cuba and Other Hispanic countries, as has been true of immigrants to the U.S. generally since the 1930s. Fifty-seven percent of new arrivals among Other Hispanics during the 1950s were women—a high proportion which reflects the pattern of rural-to-urban migration in Latin America where women also outnumber men. By the 1970s this figure had declined somewhat to 54 percent.

Among Cuban immigrants, the proportion of women was 53 percent in the 1950s and 1960s, just before and after the 1959 Castro takeover, and rose to 55 percent in the 1970s. In this case the predominance of women came about because young men of conscription age were not allowed to emigrate. The sex ratio of Cuban immigrants in the 1980s will have changed with the addition of the Marielitos, 70 percent of whom were men.[34]

Among Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrants, by contrast, men have been more numerous. For Mexicans, the male share was 53 percent during the 1950s, followed by a decline to 50-51 percent in the next two decades. This pattern probably reflects job opportunities in the Southwest. Many legal immigrants in the 1950s may have been former *braceros* or their relatives who knew of job opportunities for men in the U.S.

Among Puerto Ricans, the proportion of men was 54 percent during the 1950s, 56 percent in the 1960s, and 73 percent in the 1970s. The 1970s figure must be viewed cautiously since it is based on such a small net immigration total. Even so, the increasing predominance of males is obvious. This could be because Puerto Ricans can come to the U.S. freely, without the hurdles that face all other Hispanic legal immigrants, and men are thus easily able to come temporarily to take a job without uprooting an entire family.

Two-thirds of immigrants arriving from Mexico and "Other Hispanic" countries from 1950 to 1980 were between the ages of 15 and 44. This is typical of most migrant streams, for this is the stage of life when one can expect to profit most from a move to a place promising better economic opportunities. As might be expected, such migrants bring with them a sizable number of young children.

Puerto Rican movement during the 1970s, as noted, stands out for its net influx of migrants aged 20-29 and net emigration at ages above 35. The pattern was similar, if less pronounced, in the earlier decades.

Cuban immigrants of the 1950s were mostly in the typical young adult ages but much older in the two decades after the revolution. Thirty-three percent in the 1960s and 45 percent in the 1970s were over age 44. Seventeen percent of the Cuban women who immigrated from 1960 to 1980 were 65 and over, much higher than the 7.1 percent of Cuban women this age counted in the U.S. in the 1980 census. Demographers Sergio Diaz and Lisandro Perez point out some reasons for the older, more female Cuban immigration before the Mariel boatlift:

> "The Cuban government generally prohibited the emigration of males eligible for military conscription. Also persons of working age had to spend time in agricultural labor before being allowed to leave the country. There were no such restrictions for the elderly, a dependent population the revolutionary government was not particularly eager to keep."[35]

### *Illegal immigration*

Illegal immigration—hard to measure but thought to be on the increase—looms large in any assessment of the impact of recent Hispanic immigration to the U.S.

### *A recently arrived Guatemalan tells her story*

My husband and I recently migrated to the U.S. from Guatemala. We have two sons, one eight years old and the other eleven months old.

My parents lived in a small town called La Libertad in Peten, a rural area of Guatemala. They both worked in the small grocery store and on the ranch which they owned. My father completed six years of school and my mother about three years.

There was no high school in La Libertad, so my parents worked and saved so they could send me, my sister, and my brother to high school in Guatemala City. This was almost like going away to college because we had to find a place to live and pay room and board. All three of us graduated from high school. I specialized in secretarial studies. My sister went on to college and became a teacher. My brother got a medical degree and is working on a master's degree in public health at Stanford University.

My husband studied law for about four years in Guatemala but never graduated. He had a good tourist business until the trouble with Nicaragua caused such a drop in business that he could no longer operate. It was then that he decided to come to this country.

We are both working full time and have someone who takes care of our children. My husband is a custodian for the public school system. I took extra training when I came here and also worked on my English. I have a job as a bilingual secretary. It has been difficult, but we work hard and we are happy.

Not all illegal immigrants are Hispanics, of course, but the majority probably are. Their motives are no different from those of legal immigrants; most come seeking jobs or to escape political and social turmoil at home. Unfortunately, these legitimate interests often conflict with the interests of current citizens.

### *Who are they?*

Illegal or undocumented aliens are classified as persons crossing the border "without inspection" or with fraudulent documents, or overstaying a work or student visa. This definition rules out Puerto Ricans, with free access as U.S. citizens, and most Cubans, who have been accorded special refugee status because of the political overtones attached to their movements to the U.S. Thus the undocumented Hispanic population is made up almost entirely of Mexicans and Other Hispanics.

An estimated 50-60 percent of all illegal aliens are Mexicans,[36] stimulated by the closeness of the border, a long history of moving back and forth to fill the heavy labor needs of the Southwest's agriculture, and erratic U.S. policies. Mexicans were deported when jobs grew scarce during the 1930s and courted again with the *bracero* program as labor became short during World II. Though the *bracero* program was viewed as a way to stop illegal immigration, it actually served to step up the influx as word got round of jobs to be had across the border. By the 1950s the domestic labor supply was back up to full force and the INS set out to staunch the illegal flow with "Operation Wetback." (Many Mexicans waded clandestinely across the Rio Grande; hence, "wetback.") At the same time, however, U.S. employers were still allowed to hire illegal entrants who managed to get through. Further illegal Mexican immigration was practically guaranteed by the ending of the *bracero* program in 1964 and institution of the 120,000 hemispheric ceiling on immigration in 1968 and 20,000 per-country limit in 1977. Currently, with unemployment again high in the U.S., there is renewed pressure for control of the influx from Mexico, just as pressure mounts on the other side to escape Mexico's deteriorating economy and devalued peso.

Much of the illegal movement from

Mexico into the U.S. is offset by return migration. Workers came north, find jobs, and eventually return to home and family. The Southwest has been the traditional destination for Mexican migrants but many now make their way as far north as Chicago and Detroit. The farther the search for a job and the more urban the job is, the less likely it is that an undocumented Mexican will move back and forth across the border.

A substantial portion of other illegal immigrants are from such countries as Guatemala, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Many of these are now also crossing the Mexican border. Undocumented "Other Hispanics," however, more typically enter with a temporary work visa and stay past the expiration date, sticking to large cities to avoid detection. Many Dominicans enter through Puerto Rico. They obtain travel passes to the island and are virtually unidentifiable among Puerto Ricans in legal transit to the U.S. "Other Hispanic" illegal aliens are more likely than Mexicans to remain in the U.S. once here.

### *How many?*

In the early 1970s, estimates of the number of illegal aliens living in the U.S. ranged from 2 to 12 million. Recently a consensus has grown for an estimate of 3.5 to 6 million, as given in a 1981 report prepared by Census Bureau demographer Jacob Siegel and colleagues for the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy.[37] The latest light comes from a Census Bureau study, unveiled in April 1983, which estimated that just over 2 million undocumented persons were included in the 1980 total census count of 226.5 million.[38] This does not reveal how many undocumented residents were missed by the census, but it is difficult to imagine that it was even as many as the number counted because the Census Bureau made a concerted effort to enumerate the undocumented population and to reach all segments of the Hispanic community.

Don Doman/Immigration and Naturalization Service

*Undocumented immigrants apprehended at the Mexican border.*

Of the 2 million, 1.3 million, or 64 percent, were estimated to be from Latin America. Mexicans alone numbered 931,000. All other Latin American countries with legal immigration to the U.S. also turn up in the estimate of illegal aliens enumerated in the 1980 census but none made a substantial contribution.

That the number of illegal aliens arriving each year may be increasing is suggested by figures on deportable aliens apprehended by the INS. This number grew from 420,000 in 1971 to over a million each year in 1977 through 1979, followed by a slight drop to 976,000 in 1981 and 970,000 in 1982.[39] Most apprehensions occur at the Mexico border where the INS concentrates such efforts. From January through April 1983, there were 377,000 apprehensions at the border, a 46 percent increase over the same period in 1982.[40] Apprehensions, however, are not an accurate count of the actual number of illegal aliens entering each year since the same person may be apprehended more than once in a year. Nor do they record movements out of the country. Estimates of the annual *net* increase in the total undocumented



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population of the U.S. range from below 100,000 up to 500,000.[41]

### *Issues and new legislation*

Although the U.S. has generally approved of immigration as contributing to the country's development, this position may be eroding, according to immigration expert Michael Teitelbaum:

"There is a clear risk that growing opposition to immigration and refugee flows that are widely perceived to be excessively large, insufficiently plural, and heavily illegal may overwhelm existing domestic support for a truly humane and generous set of policies."[42]

Particularly sensitive at this time of high unemployment is the claim that illegal aliens take jobs from legal residents, including Hispanics. In fact, many of these jobs are paid so poorly that U.S. workers would not apply. Illegal workers may even promote domestic employment in the sense that they keep alive some manual labor that otherwise might be automated. Some job displacement undoubtedly occurs, but a more important impact on U.S. employment is that illegal workers tend to hold down wages and impede improvements in working conditions. Fearful of deportation, they are characteristically docile and frequently exploited. Some observers believe this lack of access to the rights and protection of the U.S. legal process is the most damaging aspect of the illegal population. Immigration expert Charles Keely puts it: "In terms of its effect on U.S. society, what is likely to prove most disruptive is not the presence of the migrants but their status as illegal aliens."[43] How better to undermine the fundamental concepts of personal rights, equality of opportunity, and tolerance of cultural diversity than to condone the existence of an illegal underclass? Some direction on this issue was provided by a landmark June 1982 Supreme Court ruling which struck down a Texas law that withheld state funds for education of children of illegal aliens. In their decision the justices declared for the first time that illegal aliens are included among persons guaranteed "equal protection of the laws" under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

Another concern is the use which illegal aliens make of public services paid for by U.S. taxpayers—welfare payments, unemployment insurance, medical services, public schools. It is known that illegals do use these services to some extent, particularly medical services, but nationwide they may pay more in federal, state, and local taxes than the cost of benefits received. Even if this is true, however, the cost of providing services falls unevenly on such local jurisdictions as Los Angeles County, which had an estimated 300,000-600,000 illegal residents in June 1982.[44]

After years of study and debate by several presidential task forces, congressional commissions, and public-interest groups arguing both for and against reform, a comprehensive overhaul of U.S. immigration law appeared to be imminent in June 1983. An immigration reform bill introduced to Congress by Senator Alan Simpson, Republican of Wyoming, and Representative Romano Mazzoli, Democrat of Kentucky, was passed by the Senate but not the House of Representatives in 1982. Reintroduced in 1983, it cleared the Senate in May by a vote of 76 to 18. Though still highly controversial, the bill was expected to clear the House by late summer 1983 and muster enough support in Congress to override a possible veto by President Reagan, concerned about the costs of providing services to illegal aliens granted amnesty under the bill.

The general provisions of the proposed legislation (as passed by the Senate in May 1983) are:

- an annual ceiling of 425,000 on legal immigrants, including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens not now subject to numerical restrictions, but not including refugees, for which quotas will continue to be set annually by the Administration and Congress (As of late June, the

House bill omitted the proposed new 425,000 ceiling on immigrants);
- continuation of the 20,000 per-country annual limit on immigrant visas, except for Mexico and Canada, which will receive 40,000 each;
- penalties starting at $1,000 for employers of at least four persons who knowingly hire illegal aliens, and authorization to develop a national identification system to verify legal residency;
- amnesty (legal status) for illegal aliens who entered the U.S. before January 1, 1980 (in the Senate bill) or January 1, 1982 (in the House bill); and
- judicial review for persons ordered to be deported, excluded, or refused asylum under the terms of the legislation.

# *Education*

Younger Hispanic adults spend more time in school than their elders did, as is now true for all racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. But Hispanics still lag behind blacks and far behind whites as a whole in average educational attainment—the key to economic and occupational progress. Some Hispanic groups are more educated than others, however, which reflects differences in immigration histories more than ethnic attitudes toward education.

Cubans, still dominated by the middle-class and professional people who were the first to flee the Castro regime, tend to be better educated than other Hispanics, like the Cuban whose story appears on page 24. So, too, are recent legal immigrants from Central and South America, like the Guatemalan woman who tells her story on page 26. The Mexican-American family described on page 30, whose roots in the U.S. go far back in history, typically progressed from little education among earlier generations to several college graduates and advanced degree-holders among the latest generations. However, educational attainment for Mexican Americans as a whole reflects the much lesser schooling of the majority who are recent legal and illegal immigrants. Average educational attainment is also low for Puerto Ricans in the U.S., partly stemming from the constant flow back and forth between the island and the mainland. Public education in Puerto Rico suffers from scant funding—just $694 per pupil in 1977—below the $900 of Arkansas which ranked lowest of U.S. states on this score.[45] Children transferred to schools in the U.S. must usually drop to grades lower than the average for their age and often have their schooling disrupted by moves back to the island; some 20,000 pupils a year were transferred back and forth between Puerto Rico and New York City alone during the 1970s. Frustration with the public school system in Puerto Rico prompts many middle- and upper-class professionals to place their children in private schools, like the physician's daughter now living in the U.S. who tells her story on page 31.

## *School enrollment progress*

Hispanics' lesser involvement in education begins early. In 1981, only 25 percent of Spanish-origin three- and four-year-olds were enrolled in school compared to some 36 percent of both blacks and whites as a whole.[46] These early education programs include public and private nursery schools and Head Start, which are particularly important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Between ages 5 and 15, nearly all Hispanics along with blacks and whites attend school, but the gap widens again from age 16 when students are able to leave school legally in most states. In 1981, school enrollment among Hispanics was 83 percent for 16- and 17-year-olds compared to some 91 percent for blacks and whites, and only 38 percent at ages 18 and 19, in contrast to roughly one-half for blacks and whites. Some 36 percent of Hispanics aged 18 and 19 were not enrolled in school and were also not high school graduates, i.e., they were dropouts. This was more than double the figure for whites of that age (16 percent) and almost double that of blacks (19 percent).

### *A Mexican American or "Hispano" tells his story*

My family has been in this country so long that no one knows when our first ancestors came. We only know about our family as far back as my grandparents.

My grandparents on my father's side were both born and raised in the Espanola Valley along the banks of the Rio Grande in New Mexico. In 1891 they homesteaded 160 acres close to what is now Los Alamos. My mother's parents came from a little town in the mountains beyond the valley where most of the land was controlled by four Indian pueblos. My grandparents on both sides spoke only Spanish and had very little education. They worked very hard farming and ranching.

My father was born in 1907 in Espanola. Both he and my mother finished the fourth or fifth grade and both spoke Spanish and English. My father still reads the newspaper every day. They raised 12 children.

My father first worked in the coal mines in Utah and then did seasonal work and odd jobs for the railroad. When the U.S. Army started building barracks in Colorado, he got a job with them and learned carpentry. As a result, he was able to get a job as a carpenter when Los Alamos was opened during World War II.

I started working when I was ten years old, selling seeds door to door from things that I grew myself. I also read a lot—mostly comic books. When I was 12, I got a job at a local department store carrying out ashes for 5¢ a day. At 13, I was sweeping and stocking shelves in the store. I worked for the store owner until I graduated from college.

I went to a public high school run by nuns. I always had good teachers who encouraged me. I had an especially good math teacher. I wanted to go to Highlands University to study to become a teacher, but my boss said he would pay my way for the first two years if I would go to the New Mexico Military Institute which he thought was a better school because it focused on math and science. So I went there. I won a scholarship in my second year and ended up graduating second in my class.

Then I went into the Army as a commissioned officer, first talking my wife into marrying me and leaving the University of New Mexico where she was studying home economics. While in the Army, I earned a master's degree in engineering from Purdue University and another master's degree in organizational development from George Washington University. After 22 years, I retired as a full colonel.

All five of our children graduated from college. The oldest son is a commercial artist with a degree from Northern Arizona University. Our daughter graduated in music education from the University of New Mexico. Another son has a degree in international business from the University of Colorado and is about to get his law degree from Harvard. The third son has a mechanical engineering degree from MIT. The fourth son has a master's degree in mechanical engineering from MIT.

As Hispanics, my family and I experienced some discrimination but we also had a lot of people who helped us. My wife was frowned upon when we were stationed in the Southwest and she was running around with five small children who were obviously Hispanic. We also had some trouble with a school system in which our children were enrolled. The little discrimination we did experience seemed so unnecessary and counterproductive.

Hispanics' high dropout rates are partly due to the fact that many are enrolled in grades below the average for their age, where they can be bored, feel out of place, and be labeled slow learners. In 1976, about 9 percent of Mexican-American and Puerto Rican 8-to-13 years-olds were at least two years behind their "expected" grade in school, compared to 5 percent of white non-Hispanics; at ages 14-20, the figures were 25 percent for Hispanics versus just

### *A Puerto Rican tells her story*

I was born in Puerto Rico and spent most of my growing-up years there. Both my grandfather and my father were physicians. My grandfather was one of the first Puerto Ricans to get a medical degree from a university in Maryland. My father got his medical degree in Spain. My father joined the U.S. Army as a general surgeon, later specializing in orthopedic and hand surgery.

I was first exposed to American teenagers when our family moved to Hartford, Connecticut, for eight months while my father studied at Children's Hospital. I attended eighth grade at a Catholic school and my two younger brothers were also at a Catholic school. I remember being impressed by the freedom the teenagers have in this country and how they talk so outspokenly to adults. Following completion of my father's studies, we returned to Puerto Rico where he resumed his private practice.

I graduated from the same all-girl high school from which my mother graduated. My parents decided I should go abroad to college so I went to George Washington University where I earned a bachelor's degree in international relations, concentrating in Latin American studies. However, I never worked in this area. Instead, I began working in human services, mostly because I speak Spanish.

I never thought of myself as a minority and still don't. Also, I never felt discriminated against. This is probably because I have light-colored skin.

9 percent for non-Hispanic whites.[47] In New England in the early 1970s, 50 percent of Hispanics were at least two grades behind and only 12 percent were in their "expected" grade.[48] Delay is particularly serious for transfer students from Puerto Rico; in Boston, for example, students aged 17-19 who were in senior high school in Puerto Rico are often placed in the sixth or seventh grade.

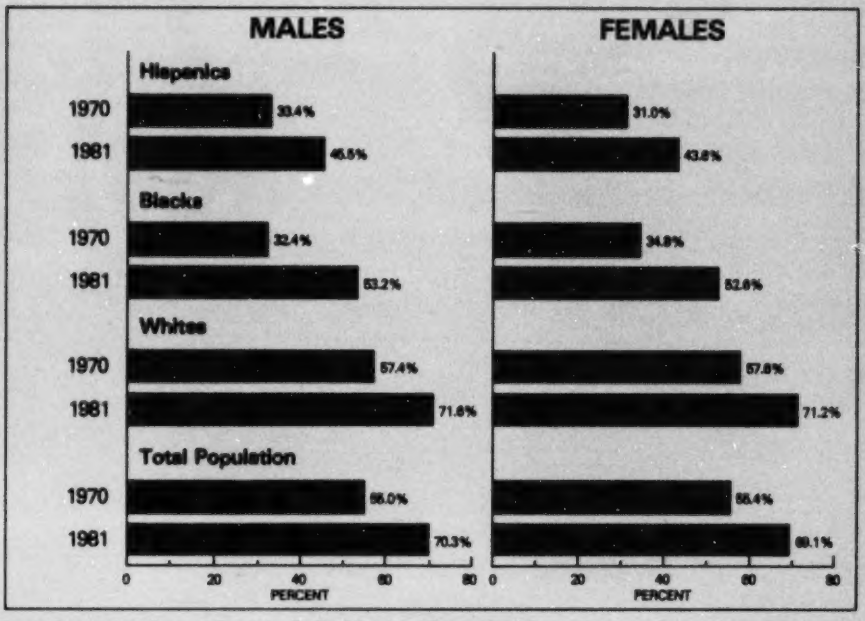
Not surprisingly, Hispanics are much less likely to graduate from high school than other groups, and the percentage of Hispanic high school graduates who go on to college dropped from 35.4 percent to 29.9 percent between 1975 and 1980.[49]

### *High school and college completion*

Hispanics aged 25 and over are increasingly likely to be at least high school graduates, like blacks and all white adults, but the gap remains wide, as seen in Figure 4 (page 32). In 1981, 46 percent of Hispanic males, for example, had completed four years of high school or more, up from 33 percent in 1970, but the figure for black males was 53 percent and for white males as a whole, 72 percent. However, younger Hispanics are catching up. Among those aged 25 to 34 in 1981, 57 percent had completed high school. Mexican Americans and Puerto Rican males have made some gains in high school completion since 1960, according to a study by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, but still trailed behind other Hispanic groups as well as blacks and all whites in 1976.[50] There is another gap in high school completion between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan Hispanics; in 1979, only 36 percent of Hispanic adult men living in nonmetropolitan areas had finished high school, compared to 44 percent of Hispanic men in metropolitan areas.[51]

Scholastic Aptitude Test scores reveal the poorer preparation of Hispanic high school graduates who do go on to college. Among entering freshmen in 1979, the average on the verbal part of the test was 356 (out of a possible 800) for Puerto Ricans and 372 for Mexican Americans compared to 442 for non-Hispanic whites, and 387 for Puerto Ricans and 413 for Mexican Americans in math versus 482 for non-Hispanic whites.[52]

***Figure 4. Hispanics, Blacks, Whites, and Total Population Aged 25 and Over Who Completed Four Years of High School or More: 1970 and 1981***




Source: Bureau of the Census, "Population Profile of the United States: 1981," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 374, 1982, Table 6-3.

Hispanic college enrollment doubled from one-quarter million to half a million between 1972 and 1981, but still made up only 4.8 percent of total college enrollment in 1981.[53] Once in college, Hispanics are far more likely than other college students to drop out; 57 percent of Hispanic males and 54 percent of Hispanic females fail to graduate, compared to 34 percent of all white males and females.[4] Figures in 1981 for adults 25 years and over who had completed at least four years of college were only 10 percent for males and 6 percent for females among Hispanics, compared to 22 percent for all white males and 14 percent for white females, and 8 percent for both black males and females.[55] Part of the reason for this disparity is that Hispanic students primarily attend two-year colleges. In 1980, 54 percent of Hispanics enrolled in college, compared to 36 percent of all white students, were attending two-year colleges.[56]

### *Why the educational lag?*

Whether or not he or she was born in the U.S. makes a difference in a Hispanic's educational attainment. Demographers A. J. Jaffe, Ruth Cullen and Thomas Boswell found from 1970 census data that Hispanics born in the U.S. generally attend school longer than their foreign-born parents.[57] Another research team found even greater educational progress between second- and third-generation Mexican Americans,[58] as illustrated in the story on page 30. Thus, like other immigrant groups before them, U.S. Hispanics' educational attainment should improve in time. Meanwhile, there are



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barriers, as Jaffe and his colleagues point out. "Cultural reinforcement" is one. A constant influx of new arrivals keeps Latin cultural values and the Spanish language alive among Mexican Americans in the Southwest, Puerto Ricans in the Northeast, and even Cubans in Florida, washed by the wave of Marielitos in 1980. A Mexican-American professional in California described how "macho" values can hinder education: "If you drop out [to father a child] or to buy a car, you're a big man. But when I came home with my Ph.D., my friends acted like they didn't know me."[59] Early pregnancy and marriage, poverty which forces teenagers prematurely into the labor force, and the problems of overcrowded, poorly equipped big-city schools which most Hispanics attend also boost dropout rates and discourage education. And like blacks and unlike earlier immigrant groups, Hispanics in the U.S. and in its schools have suffered from the discrimination accorded dark-skinned people.

Lack of English clearly retards Hispanics' general educational progress. In 1978, 26 percent of Hispanics in public elementary and secondary schools spoke little or no English.[60] On the other hand, use of Spanish is not necessarily a barrier to education, as proven by Cubans. Though educational levels are generally higher for those who grew up speaking English at home, Cubans, who outpace other Hispanics in high school achievement tests and college entrance, are also most likely to speak Spanish at home. This suggests that factors like more parental education and higher family income determine educational progress more than use of Spanish.[61]

Use of Spanish, however, is an issue in the current controversy over federal funding of bilingual education. Federally funded bilingual programs, in which a student is taught academic subjects in his native language until he can master English, began in 1968 in order to speed school progress for pupils who enter school speaking little or no English. They still cover less than half of Hispanic students in that category, funding was cut from $167 million in fiscal year 1981 to $138 million in 1982, and research has not yet shown that the programs have clearly achieved their purpose.[62] Critics claim that they slow down students' learning of English and foster the use of Spanish which hinders Hispanics' assimilation into the mainstream of U.S. society and could create an "Hispanic Quebec" in the U.S. A widely publicized report of the Twentieth Century Fund, issued in May 1983, recommended that federal bilingual funds be spent instead on teaching English to non-English-speaking children, and asserted: "Although this nation has become more aware of the value of ethnic identities, anyone living in the U.S. who is unable to speak English cannot fully participate in our society."[63]

Pat Pardinas

*Almost all Hispanic children attend school between ages 5 and 15 but dropout rates are high after that.*

## *Employment and Occupation*

From poor education to poor economic and professional standing is but a short



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step. Though Hispanics' economic status has improved in recent decades, they remain clustered in low-paying blue-collar and semi-skilled jobs in fields like construction and manufacturing that suffer high seasonal or cyclical unemployment and thus earn far less and are more likely to be unemployed and live in poverty than the white population as a whole. Again, however, Cubans and Central and South Americans fare better than Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, especially women. For example, the Guatemalan who tells her story on page 26 graduated from high school and worked as a secretary before migrating to the U.S. where she has taken additional training. Now she works as a bilingual secretary.

Economist Dennis Roth of the Congressional Research Service points out that Hispanic women aged 20 and over were almost as likely as all adult women to be working or seeking work in 1980 (48.8 percent compared to 51.3 percent) and the labor force participation rate for Hispanic men (85.2 percent) was *higher* than the rate for all adult men (79.4 percent).[64] But this comparison is misleading. As seen in Table 12, within specific age groups, Hispanic women's rates were generally 7.5 to 12 percentage points lower than those of all adult women and Hispanic men had rates slightly less than those of the total male population, except at ages 20-24 and 55 and over. The overall rates for Hispanics were pushed up because Hispanics are generally younger than the average for the total population, and younger adults are more likely to be in the labor force.

Between 1973 and 1981, the number of Hispanic women in the work force surged by 82 percent, outpacing the increase among all women, Roth points out. This was mainly due to an increase in the number of Hispanic women of working age because of continued immigration. But, except for Puerto Ricans, Hispanic women's labor force participation rate also went up nearly 9 percentage points—slightly more than that of all women. Meanwhile, the rate for Puerto Rican men dropped more than 8 percentage points, while remaining about the same for Hispanic men as a whole. Roth attributes the drop in rates for Puerto Rican men and women to the declining economy in New York City. In 1979, one-half of all mainland Puerto Ricans of working age lived in New York where total employment had dropped by 13 percent between 1969 and 1977. By 1982, only 51 percent of adult Puerto Ricans in the U.S. were in the labor force, compared to some 62 percent of Cubans and Mexican Americans and similar proportions of blacks and all whites.[65] This was primarily due to the low 37 percent of Puerto Rican women who were working or looking for work; among all other women, including Mexican Americans and Cubans, the figure was about 50 percent.

In an earlier review of Hispanics' work experience, Bureau of Labor Statistics economist Morris Newman suggests that Puerto Rican women's low labor force participation rate may also be a lingering cultural trait—women in Puerto Rico are much less likely to work outside the home than women in the U.S. But this is true of all Latin nations, and yet Mexican

***Table 12. Labor Force Participation Rates of Hispanics and All U.S. Adults, by Sex: 1980***

| Age group | Percent in labor force | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All men | Hispanic men | All women | Hispanic women |
| Total, 20 and over | 79.4 | 85.2 | 51.3 | 48.8 |
| 20-24 | 86.0 | 88.2 | 69.9 | 57.1 |
| 25-34 | 95.3 | 93.5 | 65.4 | 53.9 |
| 35-44 | 95.5 | 94.1 | 65.5 | 56.0 |
| 45-54 | 91.2 | 91.0 | 59.9 | 52.0 |
| 55-64 | 72.3 | 72.5 | 41.5 | 32.9 |
| 65 and over | 19.1 | 19.4 | 8.1 | 4.9 |

Source: Dennis M. Roth, "Hispanics in the U.S. Labor Force: A Brief Review," in Congressional Research Service, *The Hispanic Population of the United States: An Overview*, report prepared for the Subcommittee on Census and Population of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983) Table 1, p. 60.



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women once in the U.S. join the work force in proportions equal to that of all other U.S. women, although they are no more educated and have more children than Puerto Rican women, on average.[66]

### *Unemployment and underemployment*

Hispanics' jobless rate is typically 40 to 50 percent higher than the overall unemployment rate, though not so high as that of blacks, which is usually double the national rate. In the last quarter of 1982, for example, when unemployment rates climbed to the highest levels since the depression of the 1930s, 15.2 percent of Hispanic workers and 20.4 percent of black workers over age 20 were out of work, while the overall unemployment rate for adults was 10.7 percent.[67]

As might be expected, Puerto Ricans have the highest unemployment rate among Hispanics and Cubans the lowest. Both credits Cubans' lower rate to their better education and older age—60 percent of Cuban workers are over 35 compared to 36 percent of Puerto Ricans—and joblessness is usually lower among more mature, stable, experienced older workers.

A study by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights of minorities' work experience from 1971 to 1980 shows that Hispanic men and women—along with blacks and non-Hispanic white women—are more likely to be underemployed than "majority" non-Hispanic white men, as well as having higher unemployment rates.[68] Both Hispanic men and women are more likely than "majority" males to have to accept parttime work when they would rather work full time. Hispanic men are also more likely to be employed on and off, receive poverty wages, and be overeducated for their jobs, while more Hispanic women than any other minority group are paid inequitably.

### *Occupation*

In 1981, as in earlier years, Hispanic workers were more concentrated in lower paid, lesser skilled occupations than the overall work force. More than 75 percent of employed Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban women were clerical workers, machine operators or "nontransport operatives," or service workers—three of the lowest paid occupations—compared to less than two-thirds of all women workers (see Table 13, page 36). Although the large percentage of Hispanic women employed in clerical positions is similar to that of all working women, their heavy concentration in operatives jobs—dressmakers, assemblers, packers, graders, and the like—is striking. Nearly 30 percent of Cuban women, about one-quarter of Puerto Rican women, and more than one-fifth of Mexican-American women worked at these jobs in 1981, compared to one-tenth of all women. Interestingly, Puerto Rican and Cuban women were less likely than women in general to work in services—as cleaners, housekeepers, and restaurant helpers, etc.

Among men, Cubans were nearly as likely as all men to be employed in professional and technical jobs or as managers and administrators—27 compared to 31 percent. The percentages for Mexican Americans (12.0) and Puerto Ricans (15.4) in these two highest paid fields were less than half or barely half the Cuban rate, probably due mostly to their relative youthfulness and low educational attainment. Puerto Rican men were most likely to work in nontransport operatives jobs (21 percent), with large proportions also employed as service workers and craft workers. Among Mexican-American and Cuban men, craft jobs were most prevalent, with services and operatives jobs also employing many individuals. Mexican-Americans are often stereotyped as farmworkers but, in fact, only 8 percent of employed Mexican-American men were recorded as farmworkers in 1981. However, this was double the 4 percent for all male workers in the U.S. Probably, also, the actual number of Mexican-American farmworkers is understated in the Cen-

## *Table 13. Occupations of Hispanic and All Workers, by Sex: 1981*

(Numbers in percent of total workers, by sex)

| Occupation | All workers | | Total Hispanics | | Mexican American | | Puerto Rican | | Cuban | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Professional and technical | 15.9 | 17.0 | 7.7 | 8.8 | 5.7 | 8.0 | 8.5 | 11.6 | 12.9 | 9.9 |
| Managers, Administrators | 14.6 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 4.7 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 6.9 | 6.1 | 14.5 | 5.5 |
| Sales | 6.1 | 6.8 | 3.1 | 5.1 | 2.6 | 5.2 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 6.2 | 4.9 |
| Clerical | 6.3 | 34.7 | 6.4 | 31.9 | 5.0 | 32.4 | 13.1 | 36.4 | 9.4 | 31.9 |
| Craft and kindred workers | 20.7 | 1.9 | 20.1 | 2.4 | 20.9 | 2.5 | 15.4 | 2.5 | 20.7 | 2.2 |
| Operatives, except transport | 11.1 | 9.7 | 18.9 | 22.0 | 20.2 | 21.6 | 20.6 | 25.8 | 12.5 | 29.7 |
| Transport equipment operatives | 5.5 | 0.7 | 6.6 | 0.4 | 6.8 | 0.5 | 6.2 | 0.5 | 6.6 | — |
| Nonfarm laborers | 7.1 | 1.3 | 10.9 | 1.6 | 12.7 | 2.2 | 8.5 | 0.5 | 7.4 | 1.1 |
| Service workers | 8.9 | 19.4 | 13.3 | 21.4 | 12.2 | 21.1 | 17.6 | 13.1 | 9.4 | 14.8 |
| Farm workers | 3.9 | 1.1 | 5.2 | 1.6 | 7.5 | 2.5 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.4 | — |

Source: Roth, "Hispanics in the U.S. Labor Force" (see Table 12), Tables 5 and 6.

sus Bureau's Current Population Survey which collects these data; illegal immigrants, many of whom work in the fields, probably avoid interviews and migrant farmworkers are hard to locate.[69]

Though Hispanics remain underrepresented in the more skilled, higher paying occupations, their occupational status has improved since 1973—the earliest year for which suitable data are available—though more for women than men. Between 1973 and 1981, the proportion of Hispanic men employed as professionals, technicians, managers, and craft workers (which includes often well-paid jobs as construction workers and mechanics) rose slightly from 32 percent to 36 percent and the percentage of machine operators and farmworkers declined. For women there was a similar but more marked shift, plus an increase in clerical workers.

Hispanics have been sharing these shifts with all U.S. workers as lower skilled blue-collar jobs lose out to automation and white-collar office jobs increase. However, Roth notes that "generally speaking, Hispanics improved their labor market status relative to the improvement made by all workers," and observes: "It does appear that Hispanics will be able to further improve their occupational status in the U.S. if past trends continue."[70] Marked improvement, however, will require a gain in Hispanics' educational attainment rapid enough both to narrow the gap with increasingly highly educated white non-Hispanics and to meet the demands of the high-technology age.

## *Income and Poverty*

If Hispanic workers improved their occupational status relative to all workers in the U.S. during the 1970s, this gain has not yet shown up in family income statistics. In 1972, the median Hispanic family income was 71 percent of the median for white families, as seen in Table 14, which measures Hispanic-white differentials in median family income since 1972 in constant 1981 dollars. In 1981, the median



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### *Table 14. Median Income of Hispanic, Black, and White Families: 1972-1981*

(in constant 1981 dollars)

| Year | Median family income | | | Hispanic family income as percent of white income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hispanic | Black | White | |
| 1972 | 17,790 | 14,922 | 25,107 | 71 |
| 1973 | 17,836 | 14,877 | 25,777 | 69 |
| 1974 | 17,594 | 14,765 | 24,728 | 71 |
| 1975 | 16,140 | 14,835 | 24,110 | 67 |
| 1976 | 16,390 | 14,766 | 24,823 | 66 |
| 1977 | 17,141 | 14,352 | 25,124 | 68 |
| 1978 | 17,518 | 15,166 | 25,606 | 68 |
| 1979 | 18,255 | 14,590 | 25,689 | 71 |
| 1980 | 16,242 | 13,989 | 24,176 | 67 |
| 1981 | 16,401 | 13,266 | 23,517 | 70 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United State: 1981 (Advance Data from the March 1982 Current Population Survey)," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 134, July 1982, Table 3.

for Hispanic families ($16,401) was still just 70 percent of the median for white families as a whole ($23,517) after two years of recession had reduced real incomes for all families. Hispanics fare better than blacks, however, whose median family income in 1981 ($13,266) was just 56 percent of the median for white families, down from 59 percent in 1972. Like blacks, Hispanics' family income must stretch further than that of white families for family sizes are generally larger. Hispanics' relative youthfulness also depresses family income statistics—younger householders, in general, earn less than older ones.

Hispanics do better when both husband and wife work. In 1981, the median family income for such families was $23,641, or 80 percent of the median of $29,713 of all married-couple white families with the wife in the paid labor force.[71] The biggest difference in Hispanic-white family income levels comes in female-headed families. In 1981, 23 percent of Hispanic families were headed by a female alone—double the 12 percent among all white families—and their median income ($7,586) was just 60 percent of the median income of $12,508 of female-headed families among all whites.

Cubans, as might be expected, have the highest incomes of all Hispanic groups. In 1979, their median family income was $17,538, 86 percent of the white median of $20,502. This was close to double the Puerto Rican median of $9,855, which was the lowest among Hispanic families and well below the black family median of $11,644.[72] Mexican-American and Central and South American families had intermediate and similar median incomes—$15,171 and $15,470, respectively.

### *Poverty*

In 1981, close to 800,000 Hispanic families, 24 percent of all Hispanic families in the U.S., were classified as "poor" by the Census Bureau, compared to 8.8 percent of all white families (see Table 15. The Census Bureau's poverty threshold varies by family size and age of the "householder" and is adjusted annually for inflation. It is based only on money income and does not take account of the benefits received by many low-income persons such as food stamps, Medicaid and Medicare, and housing aid. In 1981, the average poverty threshold for a family of four was $9,287). On this score, too,

### *Table 15. Poverty Rate of Hispanic, Black, and White Families: 1973-1981*

| Year | Percent of families below poverty level | | | Ratio of Hispanic to white poverty rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hispanic | Black | White | |
| 1973 | 19.8 | 28.1 | 6.6 | 3.0 |
| 1974 | 21.2 | 26.9 | 6.8 | 3.1 |
| 1975 | 25.1 | 27.1 | 7.7 | 3.3 |
| 1976 | 23.1 | 27.9 | 7.1 | 3.3 |
| 1977 | 21.4 | 28.2 | 7.0 | 3.1 |
| 1978 | 20.4 | 27.5 | 6.9 | 3.0 |
| 1979 | 20.3 | 27.8 | 6.9 | 2.9 |
| 1980 | 23.2 | 28.9 | 8.0 | 2.9 |
| 1981 | 24.0 | 30.8 | 8.8 | 2.7 |

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Money Income and Poverty Status: 1981" (see Table 14), Table 15.



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Hispanics do better than blacks; nearly 31 percent of black families fell below the poverty threshold in 1981. Also, the rise in the poverty rate was a little less for Hispanics than for other families from 1979 to 1981 as the recession deepened and unemployment rose. However, Hispanic families were still 2.7 times as likely as all white families to be living in poverty in 1981, only marginally improved from the differential in 1973 (3.0) when poverty statistics for the Hispanic population were first calculated.

Thus the statistics for the past decade show Hispanics as a group still trailing well behind the general U.S. population on all measures of social and economic well-being. But a decade is hardly time enough to measure genuine progress. The higher educational attainment of younger Hispanics holds out hope that more Hispanics in general, and not just Cubans, will be joining the higher paid, white-collar work force in the future. And as they do, income levels should increase and unemployment rates fall, along with poverty rates. Even with their present income lag behind the general U.S. population, Antonio Guernica and Irene Kasperuk note in *Reaching the Hispanic Market Effectively* that "Hispanics in the United States are the wealthiest Hispanics in the world. The opportunity for economic improvement is the primary reason why legal and illegal Hispanic immigration to the United States continues unabated."[73]

## *Hispanics in America's Future*

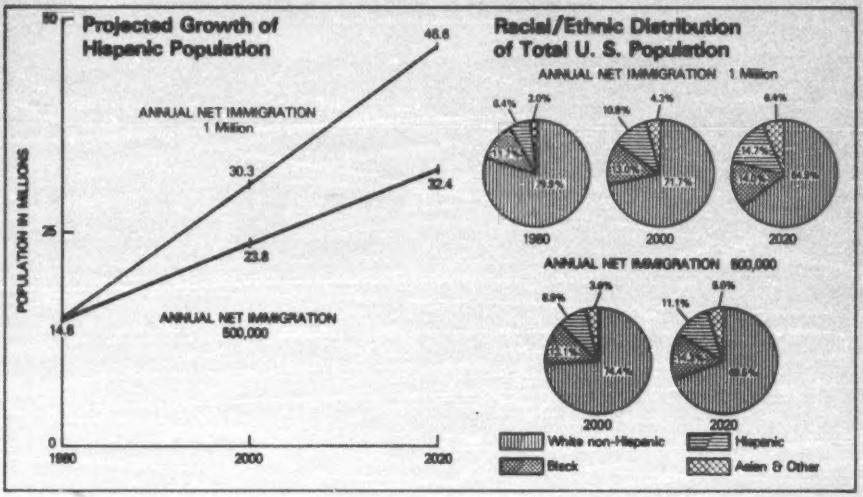
"The one demographic trend above all others that will mold the future of the Hispanic community through the 1980s and beyond is its numerical growth," Guernica and Kasperuk also assert.

The table at the bottom of Figure 5 presents two sets of projections from 1980 to 2000 and 2020 for the total U.S. population and the four main racial and ethnic groups—white non-Hispanics, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians and Others. The chart at the top shows Hispanic population growth based on these projections. The projections are *not* predictions of U.S. population growth; rather, they present population size as it might be in 2000 and 2020, given reasonable assumptions about our fertility, mortality, and immigration experience in this 40-year period.

The first set of projections assumes that annual net immigration to the U.S. will average 500,000 a year. This is below the net immigration average of 600,000 per year in 1979-81 when refugees from Southeast Asia and the sudden influx of Cubans and Haitians in 1980 inflated the number admitted legally to the U.S. But it is about what the average might be if the Simpson-Mazzoli bill were passed with a 425,000 per-year cap on annual immigrants and was rigorously implemented, and allowance is made for refugees. The assumption of 1 million net immigration per year in the second set of projections may appeal to those who wish to add net illegal immigration of at least 500,000 a year—the upper limit of recent net illegal immigration estimates (see page 28). Both sets of projections assume that the fertility of all racial/ethnic groups will converge in 2030 at the current national average of 1.8 children per woman; for Hispanics, the starting point (1980) was set at about 2.6 children per woman.

With net immigration at 500,000 per year, the Hispanic population is projected to grow to about 32 million and 11 percent of the total U.S. population in 2020. With net immigration at 1 million a year, Hispanics could number some 47 million and nearly 15 percent of the total in 2020, overtaking blacks as the country's largest minority. If all immigration had ceased in 1980, we project that Hispanics would number 24 million in 2020. This is a substantial 9.4 million increase over the 14.6 million of 1980 which would be due solely to the natural increase (births minus deaths) stemming from Hispanics already in the U.S. in 1980, but far below what the totals would be with

***Figure 5. Population 1980 and as Projected for 2000 and 2020: Hispanics, Total U.S. Population, and Four Main Racial/Ethnic Groups***




| Racial/ethnic group | 1980 Number (millions) | 1980 Percent of total | 2000 Number (millions) | 2000 Percent of total | 2020 Number (millions) | 2020 Percent of total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Annual net immigration = 500,000** | | | |
| Total U.S. population | 226.5 | 100.0 | 267.4 | 100.1 | 291.5 | 100.0 |
| White non-Hispanic | 181.0 | 79.9 | 198.9 | 74.4 | 202.7 | 69.5 |
| Black | 26.5 | 11.7 | 35.2 | 13.1 | 41.7 | 14.3 |
| Hispanic | 14.6 | 6.4 | 23.8 | 8.9 | 32.4 | 11.1 |
| Asian and other | 4.4 | 2.0 | 9.5 | 3.6 | 14.7 | 5.0 |
| | | | **Annual net immigration = 1 million** | | | |
| Total U.S. population | | | 279.1 | 100.0 | 316.9 | 100.0 |
| White non-Hispanic | | | 200.3 | 71.7 | 205.6 | 64.9 |
| Black | | | 36.4 | 13.0 | 44.4 | 14.0 |
| Hispanic | | | 30.3 | 10.8 | 46.6 | 14.7 |
| Asian and other | | | 12.1 | 4.3 | 20.3 | 6.4 |

Source: Leon F. Bouvier and Cary B. Davis, *The Future Racial Composition of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Demographic Information Services Center of the Population Reference Bureau, 1982).

the addition of immigrants arriving after 1980 and their subsequent natural increase.

How likely are these projections to materialize? Potential fluctuations in immigration (as well as fertility) make this impossible to tell. Although net immigration of Puerto Ricans dwindled to a trickle in the 1970s, their immigration remains unrestricted and could surge upward again if the island's economy deteriorates and prospects in the U.S. improve. Refugee



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influxes from Cuba depend on the vagaries of Cuban—and U.S.—policy. While immigration from Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America does fall under the control of U.S. immigration law, the open-ended family reunification clause currently allows for more arrivals than the 20,000 per-country annual limit. This will change if the Simpson-Mazzoli bill passes into law in the form approved by the Senate, but there remains the murky question of illegal immigration.

The ethnic mix of the Hispanic population should remain relatively stable for the remainder of this century, although Hispanics from countries other than Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico may increase their share of the population somewhat. Here, too, the big unknowns are unregulated immigration from Puerto Rico and illegal immigration, as well as changes in U.S. immigration law.

Whatever their future numbers, Hispanics are already a growing force in American society. There are now nine Hispanic Congressmen* (though no Senators), one state governor (Toney Anaya of New Mexico), Hispanic mayors in Denver, Miami and San Antonio, and groups like the Southwest Voter Registration Project in San Antonio are working to get out more of the Hispanic vote. Only 30 percent of Hispanics of voting age cast ballots in the 1980 Presidential election, compared to the national figure of 59 percent—down from 38 percent in 1972. Hispanics' political and social influence is marshaled by such organizations as the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the National Council of La Raza, and the League of United Latin American Citizens. There are 13 TV stations and 118 radio stations broadcasting full time in Spanish and another 100 or more scheduling ten or more hours a week in Spanish. And U.S. business has discovered the Hispanic market; J. Walter Thompson and other leading advertising agencies now have Hispanic units; Safeway, Jewel and other supermarket chains stock Hispanic culinary specialties; and Mattel markets a Hispanic version of the Barbie doll.

Many questions about the impact of the growing Hispanic population will only be answered with the passage of time. Will Hispanics assimilate into the U.S. "melting pot" as other immigrant ethnic groups have before them? How much of their identity as a group will they wish to maintain? Whatever the outcome, their arrival has changed the face of America once again. □

*The nine Congressmen are: Robert Garcia (D-New York), Kika de la Garza (D-Texas), Henry Gonzales (D-Texas), Manual Lujan, Jr. (R-New Mexico), Matthew Martinez (D-California), Solomon Ortiz (D-Texas), Bill Richardson (D-New Mexico), Edward Roybal (D-California), Estaban Torres (D-California).

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